PETER BUCK THE STORY BEHIND R.E.M.'S "THE ONE I LOVE"

GUITARPLAYER.COM

GuitarPlayer

RED-HOT WORKOUT
LEARN JOHN'S 8 STEPS TO GUITAR VIRTUOSITY
PAGE 48

CLEM CLEMPSON
HOW *SMOKIN'* MADE HUMBLE PIE THE KINGS OF BOOGIE ROCK

MADISON CUNNINGHAM
"OPEN TUNINGS WERE MY WATERSHED MOMENT"

RORY BLOCK
BILLY DUFFY
DAVE KEUNING
ROBERT DE LEO
& MORE

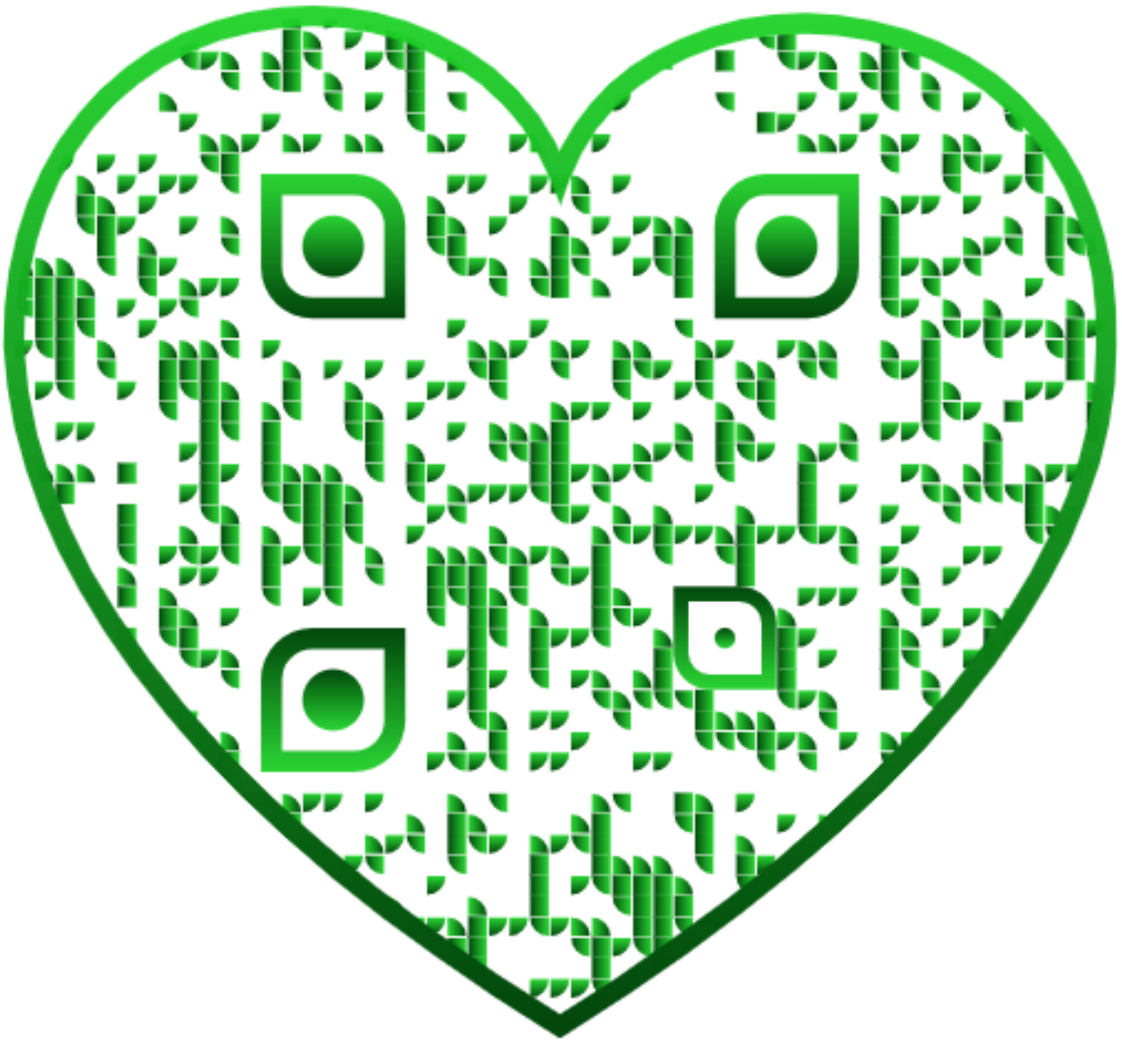
"I CAME BACK TO THE BAND IN A SPIRIT OF GIVING"

JOHN FRUSCIANTE

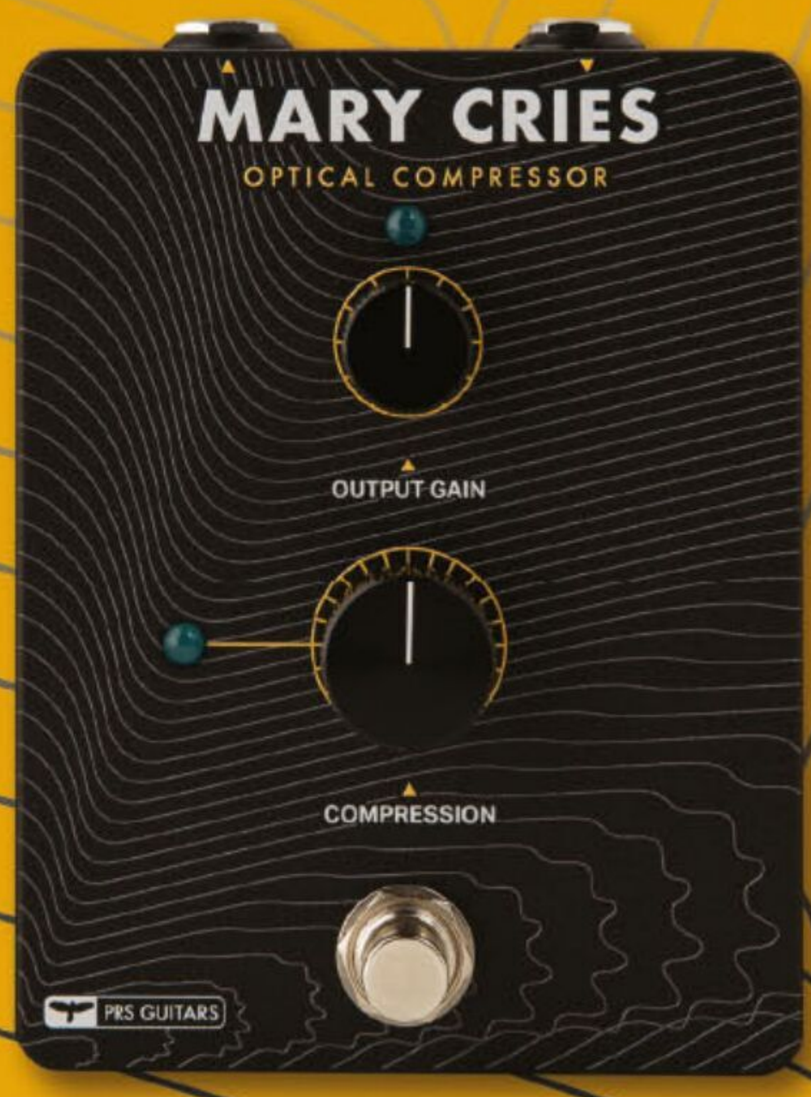
ON CHANNELING EVH, THE PURSUIT OF CLEAN TONES AND WHY EVERY GUITARIST NEEDS TO BE VULNERABLE

PLUS THE HITMAKERS: THE 7 GUITARS BEHIND RHCP'S BIGGEST TRACKS

FUTURE



INTRODUCING...



FINDING "THAT" SOUND

"This whole concept started in my studio. When recording, the musicians were looking for tones and textures that we couldn't get straight from the guitar so I started collecting great sounding pedals. Then we started building devices with the help of some friends. That's how the first pedal prototypes were born. We believe the pedals we've created are highly usable, great-sounding pieces of professional gear. A magic pedal makes the pedal board. We're trying to design pedals that make the board and stay on it".

– Paul Reed Smith

© 2022 PRS Guitars

PRS PAUL REED SMITH GUITARS

KAIZEN™

ERNIE BALL MUSIC MAN

IN COLLABORATION WITH TOSIN ABASI

Available now. Learn more at www.music-man.com

Look Good,
Feel Good,
Play Great.

Baldacci Guitars artist Trey Odum
with his custom Bighorn hollowbody.
Photo courtesy of
Lindsi Rian Creative, LLC

Baldacci GUITARS

Learn more at BaldacciGuitars.com

FAST AS F#!%*

Jackson®
AMERICAN SERIES
SOLOIST™

©2022 Jackson/Charvel Manu'facturing, Inc. All rights reserved.

Greg Koch

GRISTLE-TONE
SIGNATURE SERIES

P90

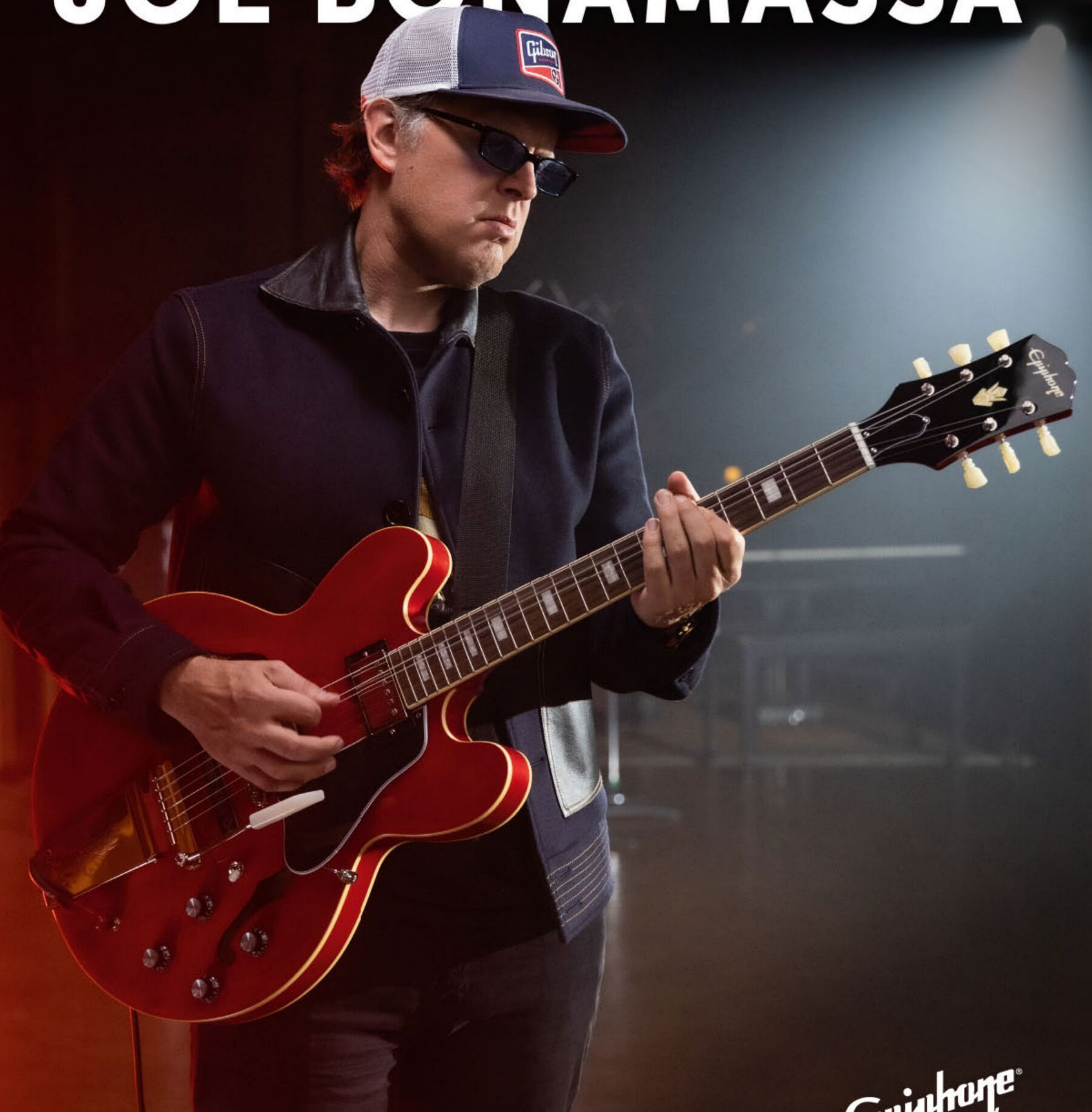
It was no surprise when Greg came asking to explore the possibilities of Fluence technology applied to the P90. Like his Fluence Gristle-Tone, Tele replacement set, Greg's P90s are deeply rooted in tradition, and then un-rooted in sounds that only Greg can conjure – satisfying all of his lascivious P90 needs!

For more information visit Fishman.com/Fluence

FISHMAN FLUENCE®

1962 ES-335 | SIXTIES CHERRY

JOE BONAMASSA



Epiphone®

FOR EVERY STAGE

CALLING ALL SONIC SCULPTORS, MORE TOOLS HAVE ARRIVED.

INTRODUCING FIVE NEW PEDALS FROM THE FOUNDER OF EFFECTS.

Maestro

SHAPE YOUR SOUND

MAESTROELECTRONICS.COM

HIGHER GROUND

LIKE SO MANY Red Hot Chili Peppers fans there at the beginning, I first heard John Frusciante on his debut album with the group, 1989's *Mother's Milk*. John was just 18 at the time of its recording, a fact unknown to me at the time. Listening to his muscular, confident playing on tracks like "Knock Me Down," "Pretty Little Ditty" and the covers "Higher Ground" and "Fire," I was sure the Chilis had snagged a guitarist a good 10 years older. But it was his work on the group's followup, 1991's *Blood Sugar Sex Magik*, that blew me away, just as it did every other fan. It was immediately clear that *Mother's Milk* had barely scratched the surface of his talent, that there was so much more to come — and John was not one to rest on his laurels.

Which is why I find this issue's interview with him so fulfilling. More than 30 years after those albums, John continues to push himself and his talents toward virtuosity — not the kind of performative perfection we typically associate with the term, but a wholeness with his art and his fellow musicians. Consider John's view of music theory: "For me, the purpose of knowing the theory is to have an understanding of why I'm feeling a particular emotion," he explains. Or his place in the band's musical arrangements: "Because Flea plays in such an interesting way, I think of intervals not only as the relationship between two notes on my instrument but as the relationship between what I'm doing and what he's doing."

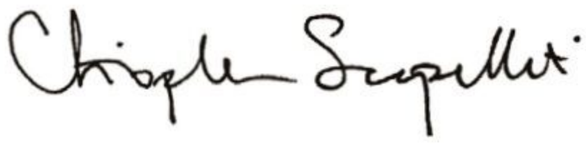
For that matter, consider John's daily guitar regimen, revealed in eight steps on page 48. It seems intense. It is intense. But John approaches is with such pleasure that it seems to be as replenishing as meditation. I'm thrilled to bring an artist of his craft and introspection to these pages, and I hope you find our interview with him as inspiring and thought-provoking as I do.

I give great thanks to Laura Swanson, EVP Media at Warner Records, who helped bring these stories to our pages. I also thank Elana Radin at RHCP management and Narci Martinez, the band's tour manager, for their graciousness and assistance. Much helpful information was also provided by John's current guitar tech, Henry Trejo, and former tech Dave Lee.

And, of course, great thanks go to Richard Bienstock, who interviewed John, Henry and Dave for this issue's stories. Rich has spoken with John on several other occasions, and I'm always impressed by the connection he's forged with him. This issue's features are the best interviews with John that I've read.

I also thank Eleanor Jane, our remarkable collections photographer, who captured the images of John's guitars featured in this issue's galleries.

Finally, I thank John for being so generous with his time and giving of himself to us, to music and to guitar.



CONTACT US

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Renewals/Questions: help@magazinesdirect.com

New Orders: help@magazinesdirect.com Phone: 800-289-9839

Mail: Guitar Player Subscriptions P.O. Box 2029 Langhorne, PA 19047

GUITARPLAYER.COM

Jackson Maxwell Online and Social Media Managing Editor, jackson.maxwell@futurenet.com

GuitarPlayer

Vol. 56 No. 13 HOLIDAY 2022

guitarplayer.com

FOLLOW US

twitter.com/guitarplayernow

facebook.com/guitarplayermag

CONTENT

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF Christopher Scapelliti, chris.scapelliti@futurenet.com

SENIOR EDITOR Art Thompson, arthur.thompson@futurenet.com

ART EDITOR Rosie Webber, rosie.webber@futurenet.com

PRODUCTION EDITOR Jem Roberts, jem.roberts@futurenet.com

LOS ANGELES EDITOR Jude Gold, judegold@gmail.com

FRETS SECTION EDITOR Jimmy Leslie, j@jimmyleslie.com

LESSONS EDITOR Jimmy Brown, jimmy.brown@futurenet.com

SENIOR IMAGE MANIPULATION TECHNICIAN Gary Stuckey

CONSULTING EDITORS Matt Blackett, Jim Campilongo, Dave Hunter, Michael Ross

ADVERTISING SALES

DIRECTOR OF U.S. MUSIC SALES Jonathan Brudner jonathan.brudner@futurenet.com, (845) 678-3064

ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR Robert Dye robert.dye@futurenet.com, (732) 241-7437

ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE Jeff Donnenwerth jeff.donnenwerth@futurenet.com, (678) 427-1535

SUBSCRIBER CUSTOMER SERVICE

To subscribe, change your address, or check on your current account status, go to guitarplayer.com and click on Subscribe, email help@magazinesdirect.com, call 800-289-9839 or write P.O. Box 2029, Langhorne, PA 19047

ARCHIVES

This magazine is available for research and retrieval of select archived articles from leading electronic database and search services, including ProQuest. For microform availability, contact National Archive Publishing Company, 800-521-0600, or search the Serials in Microform listings at napubco.com. Back issues are available. For more information, contact www.proquest.com

REPRINTS/PERMISSIONS

This magazine may not be reproduced or quoted in whole or in part by printed or electronic means without written permission from Future. To obtain permissions, contact Wright's Media, 877-652-5295.

INTERNATIONAL LICENSING AND SYNDICATION

Guitar Player is available for licensing and syndication. To find our more, contact us at licensing@futurenet.com, or view our available content at www.futurecontenthub.com.

HEAD OF PRINT LICENSING, Rachel Shaw licensing@futurenet.com

FUTURE Connectors. Creators. Experience Makers.

BRAND DIRECTOR, MUSIC: Stuart Williams

HEAD OF ART: Rodney Dive

CONTENT DIRECTOR, MUSIC: Scott Rowley

HEAD OF DESIGN (MUSIC): Brad Merrett

GROUP ART DIRECTOR: Graham Dalzell

11 West 42nd Street, 15th Floor, New York, NY 10036

COPYRIGHT 2021, Future PLC. All Rights Reserved.

Connectiv The Business Information Association, a division of SIIA VERIF AUDIT DIRECT

Future plc is a public company quoted on the London Stock Exchange (symbol: FUTR) www.futureplc.com

Chief executive **Zillah Byng-Thorne**
Non-executive chairman **Richard Huntingford**
Chief financial officer **Penny Ladkin-Brand**

Tel +44 (0)1225 442 244

NOW PICTURE — YOURSELF —

SAVING MONEY

GEICO | MOTORCYCLE

GREAT LOW RATES | MULTI-VEHICLE DISCOUNT | SPECIALIZED AGENTS

Some discounts, coverages, payment plans, and features are not available in all states, in all GEICO companies, or in all situations. Boat and PWC coverages are underwritten by GEICO Marine Insurance Company. In the state of CA, program provided through Boat Association Insurance Services, license #0H87086. Motorcycle and ATV coverages are underwritten by GEICO Indemnity Company. Customer satisfaction based on an independent study conducted by Alan Newman Research, 2020. GEICO is a registered service mark of Government Employees Insurance Company, Washington, DC 20076; a Berkshire Hathaway Inc. subsidiary. © 2022 GEICO 22_936442468

Guitar Player

CONTENTS

HOLIDAY 2022 | VOLUME 56 | NUMBER 13

PLAYERS

32
Madison Cunningham

40
John Frusciante

47
The John Frusciante Workout

50
Red-Hot Guitars

56
Clem Clempson on the making of Humble Pie's *Smokin'*

64
Billy Duffy

FRETS

70
Rory Block

NEW & COOL

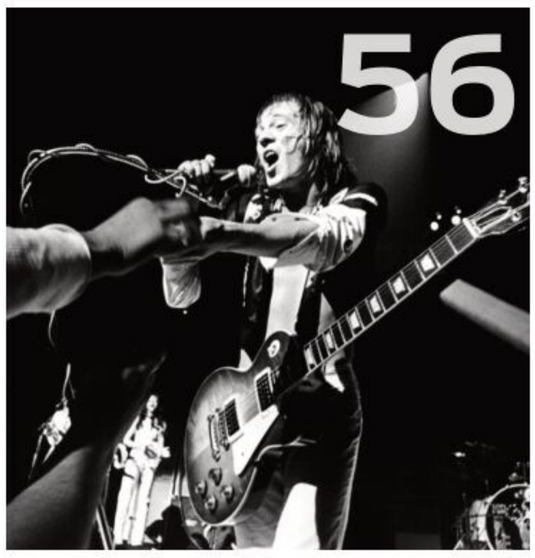
17
Martin Guitars Rich Robinson D-28

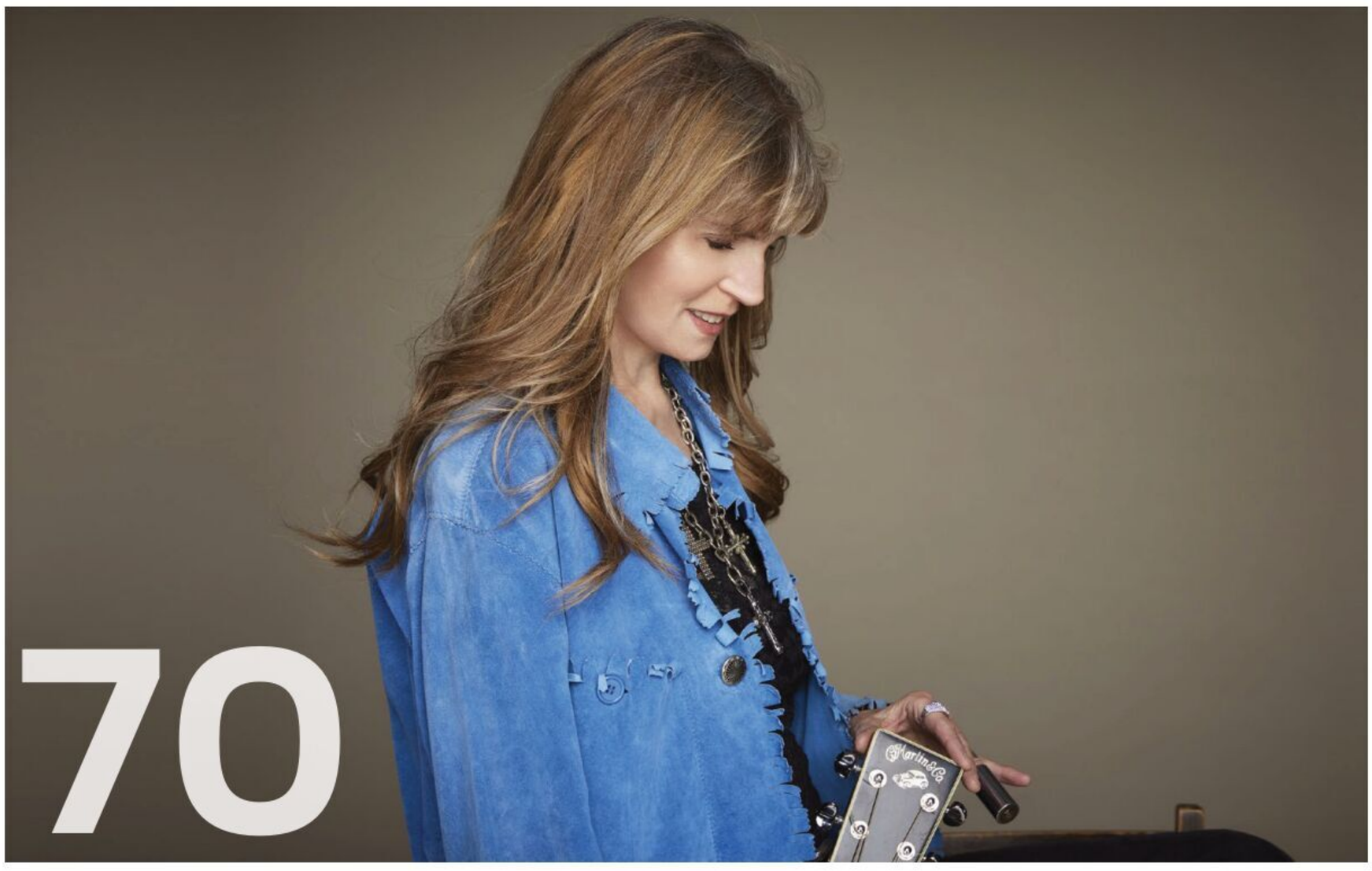
ALBUM

20
Robert De Leo

TIP SHEET

22
Tommy Emmanuel





NOAH TORRALBA (CUNNINGHAM); FIN COSTELLO/REDFERNS/GETTY IMAGES (HUMBLE PIE); SERGIO KURHAJEC (BLOCK); JONATHAN WEINER (FRUSCIANTE)

ON THE COVER
John Frusciante
Photographed by Jonathan Weiner

JOIN THE *GP* COMMUNITY

twitter.com/guitarplayernow facebook.com/guitarplayermag instagram.com/guitarplayer

Guitar Player (ISSN 0017-5463) is published monthly with an extra issue in December by Future, 11 West 42nd St., 15th Floor, New York, NY 10036. Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY, and at additional mailing offices. Canada Post: Publications Mail Agreement #40612608. Canada Returns to be sent to Bleuchip International, P.O. Box 25542, London, ON N6C 6B2. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Guitar Player, P.O. Box 2029, Langhorne, PA 19047-9957.

Sweetwater
Music Instruments & Pro Audio

Guitar Gallery — What You See Is What You Get!

Schecter
E-1 FR S Special Edition
– Green Burst

NEW!

- Thousands of detailed images of our massive stock of instruments to help you choose the perfect guitar.
- Compare colors and wood grain.
- Choose by serial number. The one you pick is exactly the one you receive.
- We even include the weight of each guitar to help you choose wisely.

It's the perfect way to choose your next guitar.

Shop now at *Sweetwater.com/GuitarGallery*
or call your Sweetwater Sales Engineer at (800) 222-4700.

55-POINT INSPECTION
Guitar perfection right out of the box.

Our detailed 55-point hand inspection ensures instruments valued at $299 and above are shipped in factory-fresh condition and ready to play when they arrive on your doorstep. We have carefully looked over every aspect of your guitar or bass — from the input jack to the headstock — and included a signed certificate of inspection, giving it our personal seal of approval that your instrument meets or exceeds factory standards.

DEDICATED SALES ENGINEER
The advice you need to buy with confidence

FAST, FREE SHIPPING
No minimum order

GuitarPlayer

CONTENTS

HOLIDAY 2022 | VOLUME 56 | NUMBER 13

FIVE SONGS

24
The Killers' Dave Keuning

COLUMNS

34
Dave Hunter's Classic Gear
1959 Epiphone Sheraton

30
Jim Campilongo's Vinyl Treasures
Federico Mompou — *Mompou Interpreta Mompou*

31
Terry Carleton's Whack Job
1962 National Westwood

LESSONS

78
The best guitar rock of 1972

82
Make your grooves organic

GEAR

84
Taylor 514ce Urban Ironbark

86
PRS HDRX 20

88
Warm Audio Centavo and Warmdrive

90
EarthQuaker Devices Sunn Life Pedal V3

92
Swope Guitars Descendant Offset Vibrato and Companion Bridge

HOW I WROTE...

98
Peter Buck on the making of R.E.M.'s "The One I Love"

92

88

90

84

98

EBET ROBERTS/REDFERNS/GETTY IMAGES

FOR CUSTOM REPRINTS & E-PRINTS PLEASE CONTACT Wright's Media : (877) 652-5295 or newbay@wrightsmedia.com LIST RENTAL: (914) 368-1024, jganis@meritdirect.com **PLEASE DIRECT ADVERTISING INQUIRIES TO** *GUITAR PLAYER*, 11 West 42nd Street, 15th Floor, New York, NY 10036. Tel. (212) 378-0400; Fax (212) 378-0470; jonathan.brudner@futurenet.com. **EDITORIAL REQUESTS TO** chris.scapelliti@futurenet.com. **PLEASE DIRECT SUBSCRIPTION ORDERS, INQUIRIES, AND ADDRESS CHANGES TO** *GUITAR PLAYER*, Box 2029, Langhorne, PA 19047-9957, or (800) 289-9839, or send an email to guitarplayermag@icnfull.com, or click to subscriber sevices at guitarplayer.com. **BACK ISSUES** are available for $10 each by calling (800) 289-9839 or by contacting guitarplayermag@icnfull.com. *Guitar Player* is a registered trademark of Future.
All material published in *Guitar Player* is copyrighted © 2021 by Future. All rights reserved. Reproduction of material appearing in *Guitar Player* is prohibited without written permission. Publisher assumes no responsibility for return of unsolicited manuscripts, photos, or artwork. All product information is subject to change; publisher assumes no responsibility for such changes. All listed model numbers and product names are manufacturers' registered trademarks. Published in the U.S.A.

Tone Within Reach

XGP® Solid Brass Bridges and Tailpieces

Slick® Hand-Aged "Old School" Pickups

Xtrem® Vibrato System

GFS® GF'Tron Pickups

GFS® Brass and Steel Tremolo Blocks

Xaviere® PRO555 Blackburst

Xaviere® PRO930 Blueburst

Slick® SL56 Indigo Ash

GFS® Brighton Rock Pickups

Blown away by some of the retail prices of the very best guitar gear? We don't mark our products up like the stuff found at your local Big Box Guitar Store. We sell warehouse direct. We design it. We manufacture it. We sell it. We stand behind it. Check out our Xaviere® and Slick® brands of killer professional quality guitars, sold at wholesale prices. Our famous GFS® pickups have been delivering the coolest tones at the most righteous prices for years. Our XGP® parts line delivers high-end solid metal performance at bargain basement prices.

We design all of our famous GFS® pickups and effects, Xaviere® guitars, new and in-demand Slick® Brand guitars, XGP® Necks, Bodies and Guitar Parts and Xtrem vibrato systems. We sell *only* warehouse direct, at wholesale prices.

All of our products are designed by musicians, for musicians.... priced for musicians. Remember, you can ONLY buy GFS® Pickups, GFS® Electronics, MODboards, Slick® Guitars and Slick® Pickups and XGP® Parts from Guitarfetish.com... Won't you stop by and check us out?

Slick®, GFS®, XGP®, and Xaviere®, are sold exclusively at www.Guitarfetish.com

LEAVE YOUR AMP AT HOME

For the first time ever, the authentic sound and feel of a real tube amp driving a perfectly-matched speaker cabinet in a great-sounding room is available in a pedal-sized enclosure. With no menus to dive through, IR-based speaker cabinets and mono or true stereo operation, your path to getting killer tones when going direct just took a major shortcut.

strymon

ANGEL MAKER

Martin's Rich Robinson Custom Signature Edition D-28 is a heavenly re-creation of the guitarist's celebrated 1954 dreadnought.

BY JIMMY LESLIE

SIGNATURE MODEL ELECTRIC guitars with aged finishes have been around for a while, but I had not encountered a relic'ed signature acoustic until Martin announced the D-28 Rich Robinson at the 2022 NAMM Show. The model designed to capture every nuance of the 1954 D-28 handed down to the guitarist by his father, Stanley Robinson, a working musician during the '50s and '60s who played it at the Grand Ole Opry as well as on tour in the folk outfit the Appalachians. When he was a teenager, Robinson used the instrument to conjure the Black Crowes' signature acoustic tune, "She Talks to Angels," and he went on to write scores of classic Crowes, Magpie Salute and solo tunes on the historic dreadnought. Robinson has dubbed its re-creation the Appalachian.

"If you get one good guitar you need two or more of the same," he tells *Guitar Player*. "I wasn't going to tour with my dad's guitar because it holds too much weight for me. Martin was interested in re-creating it exactly, which piqued my interest. I was amazed when I put the prototype next to my father's guitar. It looks exactly like his."

Seeing the guitar for the first time, my immediate impression was, "Wow, they really did relic the hell out of it." If the devil is in the details, this guitar is downright satanic! Examples include the chewed spruce on the lower lip of the sound hole, cracks in the Sitka top's thin vintage gloss finish and belt buckle divots on the back's aged satin finish. These are tactile elements you can feel with your fingers, and not mere cosmetic touches. My second thought was one of relief, because this was the first Martin review guitar I wasn't worried about scratching. Little nicks and scratches are literally everywhere that they appear on Robinson's original. The back of the neck has lighter-colored areas where it's been "played" most, and the bindings and bridge pins are slightly yellowed, more in some spots than others.

There is no visible fancy signature inlay or any sort of modern appointment. Everything from the headstock to the hardware with aged nickel tuners is simply period correct. The primary difference from Robinson's vintage D-28 is that the back and sides aren't made of Brazilian rosewood — which is essentially not available anymore — but rather East Indian rosewood, the next closest thing.

"It's hard to tell the difference other than that this wood is so much younger," Robinson says. "There's a lot of potential for the sound to open up. It's still a new guitar, so the worst it's going to sound is the first day you play it. This guitar sounds great now, but it's only going to get better 10 years down the road from the vibrations of playing it all that time."

"I WAS AMAZED WHEN I PUT THE PROTOTYPE NEXT TO MY FATHER'S GUITAR. IT LOOKS EXACTLY LIKE HIS"

Holding the guitar in Robinson's presence at the NAMM show, I first noticed its chunky neck. Having played so many modern necks, I find it easy to forget what a real vintage profile feels like. This one's not in Louisville Slugger territory, but it's a voluptuous C-shaper, with a standard taper from the first position to the 12th. The nut measures 1 11/16 inches, slightly smaller than the 1 ¾ inches that has become the modern standard. The action is pretty low and easy, and unlike a '54, this guitar has an easily adjustable truss rod. I didn't need to touch it though. Although my hands are not large, I found barre chords surprisingly manageable and had no problem executing pretty much anything I felt like playing, up and down the ebony fretboard.

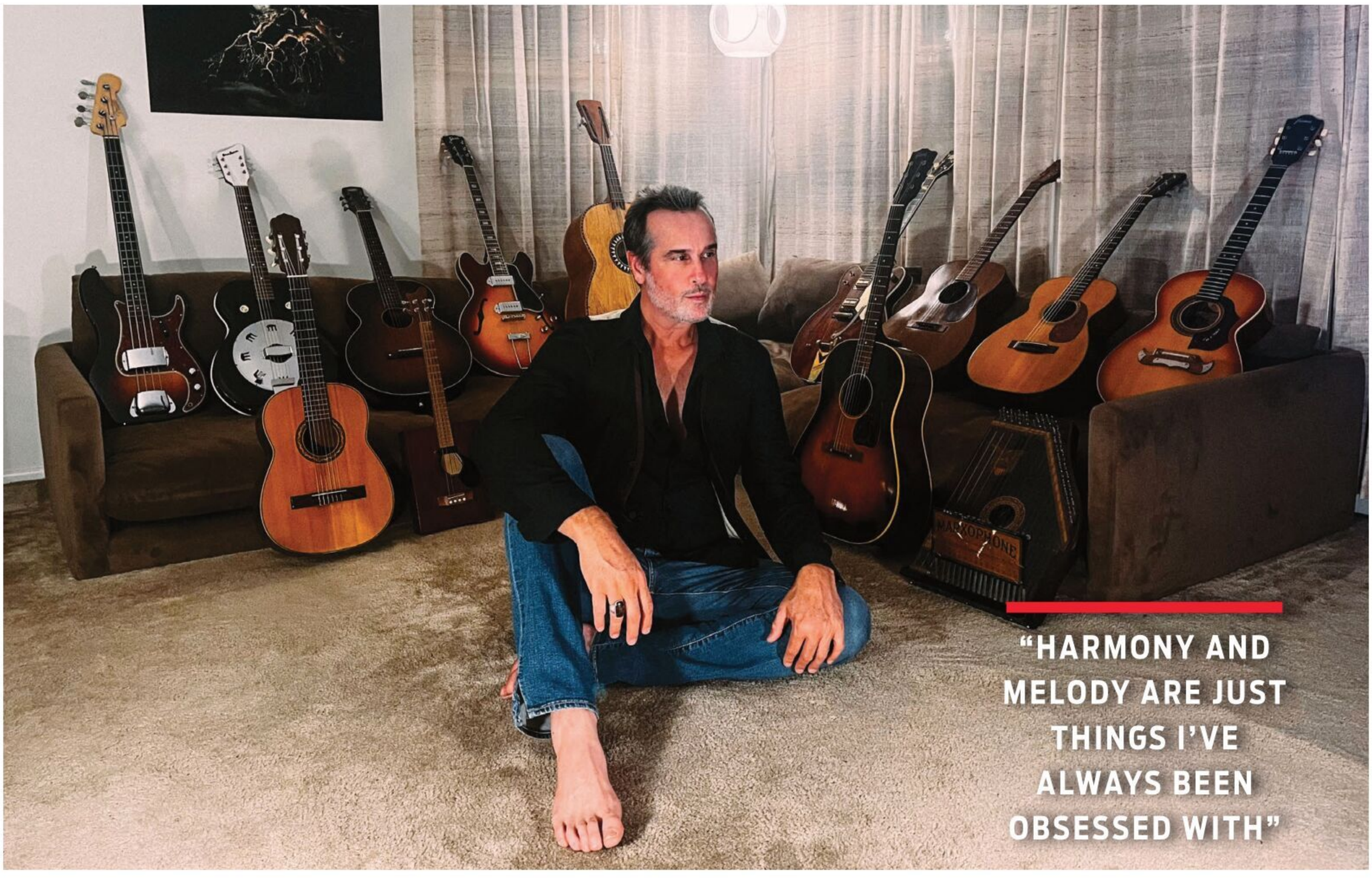
The D-28 Rich Robinson's signature sound is lively and loud! According to Martin, it features "rearward-shifted non-scalloped bracing, which offers added volume and a very balanced tone." That all makes sense because while this D-28 is a sonic boomer, it's not all about the bass like some dreads. The focus is more in the middle range, balanced nicely with a present top and a snappy low end. Give it a strong strum and the whole

guitar resonates, with sweet, enduring sustain. It's body feels alive vibrating against your own. And there's no need for kid gloves: This is a terrific troubadour strummer that invites a strong attack. Play it hard and the tone hits you right back, practically smiling, with no compression. The Robinson signature is fantastic for sounding off huge, open chords, and it holds open tunings like a boa constrictor. One can see how Robinson was drawn to create so many classic tunes in alternate tunings, as that's when this lively guitar sounds most vivacious. I had to put the RR D-28 in open E and give the "She Talks to Angels" intro a go. The resonance was absolutely radiant!

Not everyone is going to want a relic'ed acoustic (my wife couldn't understand why *anybody* would), but Martin did a remarkable job creating a kick-ass new guitar that looks like a road-worn 70-year-old. Any die-hard Robinson fan will appreciate the lengths Martin has gone to create this impossibly specific instrument. I'll admit to being one who has never missed a Crowes tour or album. Shoot, I've got one of Robinson's actual picks, as well as his signature brass D'Addario slide, and I can attest to the fact that putting those tools into play with this ultimate acoustic Robinson replica produces tones remarkably like his. Interestingly, this D-28 is particularly slide-friendly, considering its easy low action. The fact that it looks exactly like his heirloom is cool, even if one never sees the original artifact. The Rich Robinson Custom Signature Edition D-28 welcomes further scratches and dings to accumulate over time, resulting in a combination of original birthmarks and one's own love scars. Play hard, work hard, and take it on the road with no worries. What a fun way to start a relationship with an "old" friend.

Robinson says he's looking forward to writing fresh songs on the Appalachian. We're enthusiastic about those, and the inspirations carried with each painstakingly crafted Custom Signature Edition.

CONTACT martinguitar.com
PRICE $6,999



"HARMONY AND MELODY ARE JUST THINGS I'VE ALWAYS BEEN OBSESSED WITH"

FLYING LESSONS

Stone Temple Pilots' Robert De Leo takes his first solo journey on the lush acoustic *Lessons Learned*.

BY VINNIE DEMASI

"I WANT ALL my songs to work acoustically," Robert De Leo explains. "When it comes to songwriting, that's essentially where everything starts out for me." As bassist, co-founder and primary songwriter with Stone Temple Pilots, De Leo is responsible for penning some of the most rhapsodic modern-rock anthems of the past few decades including "Plush," "Interstate Love Song," "Down," and "Between the Lines." But behind the driving rhythms and pulsing guitar riffs, the band always displayed a keen sense of melody and sophisticated harmonic and sonic twists that distinguished them from most of their peers. Other songs such as "Wonderful," "Hello It's Late," "Cinnamon" and "Glide" showed De Leo to be a learned student of '60s and '70s psychedelic pop, country and folk rock.

Now on his first solo album, *Lessons Learned*, De Leo proves himself a crafty and accomplished fingerstyle guitarist as well as a brilliant tunesmith, trading distortion for Dobro and delivering 10 sublime and introspective tracks whose mellow grandeur comes from lush acoustic layering. Alongside De Leo — who contributes electric guitars, steel and nylon string acoustic guitars, bass, *guitarrón, cigfiddle*, acoustic lap steel, Marxophone, tabla drums and backing vocals — *Lessons Learned* boasts many distinguished guests, including vocalists Jimmy Gnecco (from Ours), Pete Shoulder (Winterville and Sloper) and Kara Britz (Blake Shelton), as well as cellist/arranger Dave Eggar (FLUX Quartet/American Modern Ensemble) and De Leo's Stone Temple Pilots bandmate Eric Kretz on drums. Those unfamiliar with De Leo beyond his band's mainstream radio hits may be surprised to find an offering that comfortably shares artistic space with the solo works of artists like Kris Kristofferson, Leonard Cohen, Glen Campbell and Van Morrison.

You play a lot of fingerstyle guitar on *Lessons Learned*. Did you start out as a fingerstyle guitarist?

Yes. I actually played guitar before I ever picked up a bass. I was about 15 years old when I got my first. From the start I never felt comfortable with a pick in my hand, so I was always picking out chord progressions with my fingers, and many of the songs I wrote for Stone Temple Pilot started out with me just plucking a nylon-string. Growing up, I always was fascinated by rock players like Steve Howe and country players like Glen Campbell, who could do these amazing things with their fingers. About 10 years ago, I finally sat down and really forced myself to get Travis picking together, but even now I feel like I still have so much to learn and explore with it.

The songs on *Lessons Learned* are very cohesive. Did you write most of them specifically for the album or were these

songs and musical ideas that had been kicking around for a while?

Most things were written fairly recently. The world allowed us all a lot of time when it essentially shut down for the pandemic. Like many people, I was sitting around wondering what to do. I began pulling out some of my acoustic instruments just to become reacquainted with them. I wanted to get back in touch with my guitar playing, and that really was the creative spark that led to the writing and recording of the album.

Are you playing a nylon-string on "She Brings the Rain"?

Yeah, it's a three-quarter scale that was made in the '50s. I'm not sure what brand it is, but it's really become my go-to guitar that I keep sitting out in my living room and pick up whenever I feel inspired. I bought it at the instrument shop of the Folk Music Center, which is a wonderful place in Claremont, California, started by Ben Harper's grandparents Dorothy and Charles Chase. I also bought a unique four-stringed fretted guitarrón, which I tuned like a regular bass. This was perfect for me because I wanted an acoustic bass sound, but I can't really play upright. I'm playing the guitarrón on "Is This Goodbye" as well.

"Put Aside Your Sorrows" sounds like it could fit right in on side two of *Led Zeppelin III*. You tracked it with some unusual stringed instruments.

The Travis-picked main riff is played on a four-string cigfiddle which is essentially a guitar fashioned with a cigar box–shaped body. This particular one was made by Matty Barratto and is tuned to an open C♯ [*low to high, C♯, E♯, G♯, C♯*]. I also used it on "Is This Goodbye" but tuned a half-step higher, to open D. It's a cool little instrument, and when I picked it up, all these interesting ideas just came out of it. For this record, I brought in a bunch of other unique instruments that nicely complement the acoustic guitars. For example, on this song, "She Brings the Rain," and "Is this Goodbye," you can hear a Marxophone, which is like a zither that's played with metal hammers and sounds like a dulcimer or mandolin. On the title track I'm using a mahogany 1937 Oahu acoustic lap steel in open E tuning [*low to high, E, B, E, G♯, B, E*] in certain parts.

RECOMMENDED LISTENING

Lessons Learned

"Big Sky Woman," "Love Is Not Made of Gold," "Put Aside Your Sorrows," "Everything," "Is This Goodbye"

It sounds like you're using non-standard tunings throughout the album.

I've fallen in love with Nashville tuning and I used that for layering throughout the album. On "Love Is Not Made of Gold", I tuned the high-E string down a whole step, to D, then capoed on the sixth fret and played a descending riff on the lower strings against the three open high strings. The licks you hear during the verses are also the Gretsch Country Gentleman with the same tuning and capoing, and the beautiful melodic solo break is Matt Pynn on Dobro. When I first heard it mixed together with Dave Eggar's string arrangements, it literally brought me to tears.

With all the layered instruments, how did you manage to get so much clarity and separation?

Well, I have to give a ton of thanks and credit to Ryan Williams, who did a wonderful job engineering and mixing *Lessons Learned*. We were really careful to always choose the right instrument and the right microphone. I went between using the rich fullness an old 1950's RCA 77-DX ribbon mic for the main tracks, and the pluck and clarity of either a vintage Neumann KM 86 or U 67 for the overdubs and complementary parts. To me, part of the arrangement process is choosing the right instrument and the right microphone to capture its sound.

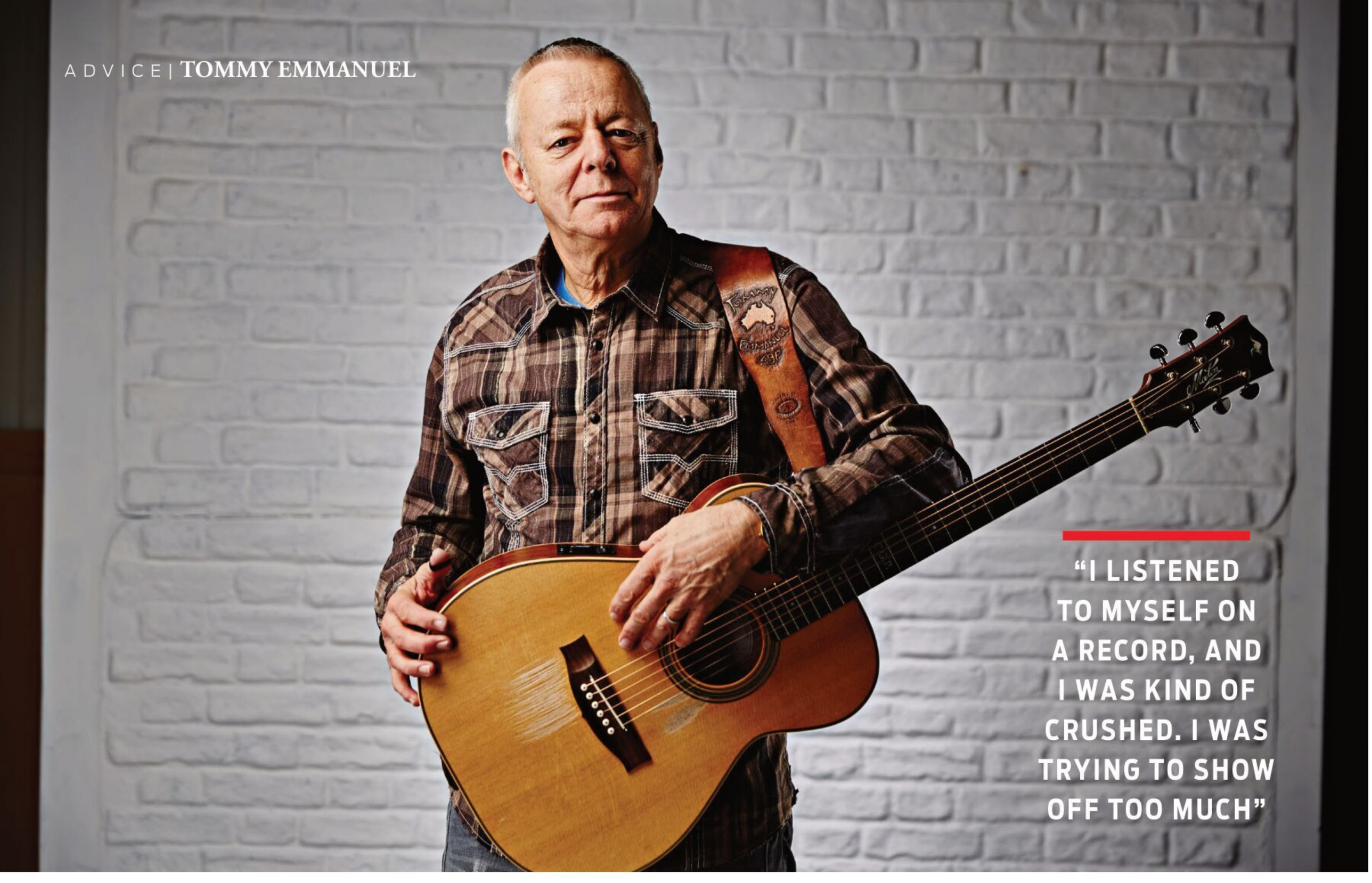
How did you track that beautiful shimmery reverb sound for the guitar break in "What Will Be"?

I love the way acoustic and electric sound layered together when playing a unison part. That's a 1955 Gibson J-45 on the left and the Gretsch Country Gentleman on the right. The pickups on the Gretsch in combination with amp reverb and a slight modulation from the tremolo bar create an instant vibe. That sound was printed directly and not processed during the mixing phase. I was inspired to write the song when I landed on this unusual chord voicing — a B♭ on the A string, an A on the G string, a D on the B string and a G on the high E. I guess you could call it B♭maj13.

You write songs with uncommon and intricate chord progressions. Did you ever study harmony formally?

No, not really. Harmony and melody are just things I've always been obsessed with. I grew up listening to a ton of great music of all different styles, and whenever I hear something I'm actively listening to pick stuff up. Even when I was young, I was very focused on the entirety of the music-making process though. I'd want to find out who played on the records I loved, who produced them and where they recorded, so I guess that was my formal education in a way. It's both the curse and gift of being a musician — your musical mind never completely shuts off because you're always analyzing what you hear.

COURTESY OF ROBERT DE LEO



"I LISTENED TO MYSELF ON A RECORD, AND I WAS KIND OF CRUSHED. I WAS TRYING TO SHOW OFF TOO MUCH"

TIP SHEET

He steals from the best, but Certified Guitar Player Tommy Emmanuel lives by six guiding principles all his own.

BY JOE BOSSO

PHOTOGRAPHY BY ADAM GASSON

I LEARN SO much from other players," says acoustic guitarist extraordinaire Tommy Emmanuel. Emphasizing that point, he lets us in on a little secret: "I even steal from them." He laughs. "No, really, it's what we do, all of us. You have to have your antenna up all the time. If I spend a few minutes with people like Jeff Pearson or Steve Vai, they'll do things that just knock me out. Before you know it, I'm playing the same licks, but I make them mine. And that's okay. It's part of the musical dialog we have as musicians."

Although he's recorded dozens of albums of his own material, Emmanuel constantly finds new inspiration in reworking other people's material. On his new EP, *Accomplice Series Vol. 3* (CGP Sounds), a duet with British acoustic virtuoso Mike Dawes, he tackles songs such as Sting's "Fields of Gold," John Mayer's "Slow Dancing in a Burning Room" and Nirvana's iconic alternative rock smash, "Smells Like Teen Spirit."

"It's always an adventure taking a famous song like 'Smells Like Teen Spirit,' which had such power from electric guitars, and transposing it for acoustic guitar," Emmanuel. says. "I had such a good time working out Kurt Cobain's vocal melody for an acoustic. I found these various bends and vibratos and these funny little chord parts. I was basically the lead singer through my guitar. You find yourself doing things you might not do with your own music when you rework certain tunes. I recommend people try it." Here, Emmanuel offers six more tips for players.

1. CHOOSE SONGS THAT SPARK YOUR CREATIVITY

"For me, everything starts with a good song. Obviously, 'good' is subjective. You might think a song is good, while another person thinks it's the worst thing he's ever heard. That's okay. That's what makes the world go 'round.

"To me, a good song is something you can play that allows you to be creative and emotional, and take the listener on a journey. A good song is a place where you can investigate various aspects of your personality, and inevitably you're going to use that as a springboard for your guitar playing. Very frequently with songs I cover, I find myself playing things that might never have occurred to me. It's almost like I'm the collaborator with the original writer. It allows you to put your own stamp on somebody else's songs. This morning I played 'She's a Woman' by the Beatles, and I put all sorts of licks into it that aren't on the original. That's what a good song does — it sparks your creativity."

2. DEVELOP CONFIDENCE IN YOUR FEEL

"It can take years to get your timing and groove together. It's like a muscle memory

that you have at your immediate recall. Without it, you'll be speeding up and slowing down when you play, and that drives people crazy. If you're not using a metronome, get to it immediately. It will improve your playing almost from day one, and people will want to listen to you and play with you.

"I was probably 30 years into my playing when I realized I should use a metronome. What did it for me was working with drummers who were really good. Their timing was immaculate, but I wasn't syncing up with them properly. I still had all this childish enthusiasm, and I was playing all over everything. Around the same time, I listened to myself on a record, and I was kind of crushed. I had to admit that I was trying to show off too much, and I wasn't listening to the other players. After that, I got myself a date with a metronome, and we've been in a serious relationship ever since."

3. FIND YOUR GUITAR'S SWEET SPOT

"When you play an acoustic, you'll find there are places on the guitar where the voices sound better than in other spots. You can adjust your picking hand an inch one way or the other, and everything will sound different. And if you really pay attention, you'll find that one particular spot for whatever you want to play — chords, a lead, whatever — and suddenly the clouds open up and everything is beautiful. And that will inspire you to play and be creative.

"Don't settle for a bad sound. If something is a little off with your tone, figure out why. It could be that your guitar needs some work. The intonation might be off, or maybe you need different strings. There could be a lot of reasons why your sound isn't giving you what you need, but do the work and investigate what's wrong. In the end, you'll make better music, and you'll be a better player."

4. DON'T JUST USE A TUNER — USE YOUR EARS, TOO

"This sounds so simple and basic, but it's quite important and should be taken seriously. First off, find out what kinds of strings work on your guitar — which brands and makes. Using the right strings will allow your guitar to tune up beautifully.

"Then, use a digital tuner, but also use your ears. Get used to the sound of being

really in tune. What I like to do is tune my guitar with my tuner, but I'll test it by playing certain chords around the neck. What I'm looking for is that middle ground between what the tuner says and what my ear tells me. Sometimes that little adjustment I need to make is 'between the cracks,' as I like to call it. It takes a bit of time and patience, but trust me, a well-tuned guitar is a joy to play.

"And by the way, I use a digital tuner that also has a metronome feature. Wherever I go, I can play in tune and in time, which satisfies two of the items on this list!"

5. RECORD YOURSELF

"This is something that all guitarists should do after they've been playing a while. Record yourself and listen to your playing, and then let your instincts tell you what you need to work on. You need to hear every detail, so listening without playing will let you focus on what you really sound like.

"It can be a humbling experience sometimes, because you might think your playing is terrific, and you realize, 'Wow, I'm all over the place here!' Or, 'I thought I was spot on. But I'm not...' That's okay. We all go through it. Even today, I listen to my recordings and I think, 'Is the melody right? Are the chords doing what they should?' You have to really focus on everything that's going on, because that's what other people will do when they listen to you on a recording."

6. BE HONEST WITH YOURSELF

"This is part of the previous tip. Always be honest with yourself about your playing and abilities. Otherwise, you're settling for mediocrity, and we don't do that. I always want to know that I'm doing my best, and I can only get there by being truthful with myself. The bottom line is, you can't fool people, so don't fool yourself."

Dave Keuning warms up with his Gibson Explorer before a live performance at Dingwalls in London, December 10, 2018.

MY CAREER IN FIVE SONGS

Killers' axeman Dave Keuning discusses five memorable hits and deep cuts from his extensive rap sheet.

BY VINNIE DEMASI

THERE ARE "HIT" songs and there are "big" songs. Hit songs are popular for a while and resonate most with the young-adult music listeners of the era. Big songs — like "Shout," "Sweet Caroline" and "Don't Stop Believin'," to name a few — stick around for generations, transcend music trends, become part of our pop culture lexicon, and are must-plays at parties, clubs and public celebrations. Big songs light up a room and get everyone from your nephew to your great-grandma singing along.

The Killers' "Mr. Brightside" is a big song. Written by guitarist Dave Keuning with Brandon Flowers, the group's lead vocalist/keyboardist, the 2003 modern-rock track has sold several million copies, been streamed hundreds of millions of times, topped numerous readers' polls, appeared in multiple films and been adopted by several sports franchises as an unofficial anthem to play during games.

But even though "Mr. Brightside" may be a phenomenon, it was hardly a fluke. Over the past two decades, Keuning and fellow bandmates Flowers, drummer Ronnie Vannucci Jr. and bassist Mark Stoermer have produced multiple hit singles and chart-topping Platinum albums, earned myriad industry awards and Grammy nominations and toured the world playing for millions of fans. And much like a modern-day Andy Summers or Lindsey Buckingham, Keuning has earned props for his crafty, new wave–inspired guitar parts and melodic song-serving sensibilities, helping the Las Vegas–based quartet become one of the most successful and globally recognized bands of the modern rock era. While on a brief hiatus from the band, Keuning also tracked two critically acclaimed solo albums, 2019's *Prismism* and 2021's *A Mild Case of Everything*.

When we spoke with Keuning, he and the Killers were busy preparing for a fall tour while simultaneously recording a new studio album slated for release in 2023. Before hitting the road, the guitarist was more than happy to catalog a quintet of career highlights with us.

"MR. BRIGHTSIDE" THE KILLERS — *HOT FUSS* (2004)

"The popularity of this song has definitely

OLLY CURTIS

grown over the years and I still get a thrill when I hear it played at a sports stadium. It's the oldest song in the Killers' repertoire. I had the riff that became the verse and pre-chorus demoed on a four-track before I even joined the band. I remember giving that tape to Brandon, and the next day he came back with the lyrics and vocal melody. When we played it with the chorus for the first time, I knew we really had something.

"After the song came out in 2004, I saw the opening riff transcribed somewhere on the top four strings, but I'm actually playing a Dadd9 voicing with the root on the 17th fret of the A string and the high-E string ringing open. The open E is the key to the whole thing. That song, just like about 90 percent of our debut album, *Hot Fuss*, was my Ibanez Destroyer into a Fender Hot Rod DeVille."

"WHEN YOU WERE YOUNG" THE KILLERS — *SAM'S TOWN* (2006)

"This is another track that that came about during our soundcheck, from a riff our bassist, Mark, had. This song has a lot of sentimental value to us, because it was one that we all really liked and contributed equally to. I'm also not really sure where our career would be without it. It was the first single from our second album, and there was a ton of pressure to build on the success from our debut. Actually, the record company wasn't sure it should've even been the first single, but thankfully it did really well.

"YOU CAN BUY AN AMP YOU'LL THINK WILL SOUND AMAZING, AND SOME CHEAP AMP YOU'VE HAD 10 YEARS BEATS IT OUT"

"To record the track, I plugged a Fender Starcaster into a Hiwatt head, a Laney head and a Fender Hot Rod DeVille, which were each isolated, miked and tracked separately. [*Co-producer*] Alan Moulder has a really good ear for guitar tones, and this gave him different options to choose which guitar track or tracks he thought worked best for which part in the song. Recording is funny, because you can go out and buy a great amp you'll think will sound amazing, and when you get in the studio some cheap amp you've had for 10 years beats it out! It all depends on how it's miked and how it sits in the mix, and it's hard to guess in advance what amp will be right for what part of what song.

"I had originally recorded the song on a Strat, and everyone was pretty happy with it, but I decided to redo it. I'm glad I did, because the Starcaster just sounded fuller, and it's one of the songs I'm most proud of. For the chordal sections of the song, I'm sliding a shape up the neck that keeps the open G-string drone going. For the solo, I'm just kind of wailing on the two notes that felt right, and keeping it minimal I think made it more powerful. 'When You Were Young' was actually the subject of an episode of the *Song Exploder* series on Netflix."

"ALL THE PRETTY FACES" THE KILLERS — *SAWDUST* (2007)

"This was a song that we wrote during our first major tour for the *Hot Fuss* album. As the album got more and more successful, we added it to our setlist because we started playing bigger and longer shows as a headliner. We recorded it for our second album, *Sam's Town*, but it was already a year old by then and didn't really fit the vibe of the rest of the album's material, so it wound up on a B-side and later on the compilation album, *Sawdust*. It's definitely one of our heaviest songs, and that's probably one of the reasons I like it a lot.

"It just kind of built from that six-note G sharp–minor opening riff I came up with while noodling around during soundcheck. Live, I played it with a Fender Stratocaster, but in the studio I used my Ibanez Destroyer for the crunch chords and a Fender Telecaster for the higher parts. I actually use that Tele a lot for the high chimey things, and it's the best-sounding guitar I have for that type of stuff. But it's not a guitar I want to take out on the road."

Onstage in Las Vegas, 2016.

KEVIN WINTER/GETTY IMAGES

Keuning plays his Ibanez Destroyer, March 9, 2009.

"HUMAN"
THE KILLERS — *DAY AND AGE* (2008)

"This is one of the first things we had written for our third album, *Day and Age*. The basic tracks were recorded in a few hours one night in London during an impromptu session at producer Stuart Price's house, and thankfully the magic just happened. We had practiced it a few times in soundcheck but with a different arrangement and a very different guitar part. After we laid down the basic chords and beat, though, I decided to try something a little unusual and came up with that syncopated single-note line that runs through the whole song. It's repetitive and slightly off from the downbeat, but it just felt right. A lot of people thought it was a loop that Stuart created but I'm actually playing it all the way through. I remember I just grabbed one of Stuart's hollowbody guitars to track the part. I believe I played it through a Fender Twin Reverb, then double-tracked it straight into the computer.

"WHEN IT CAME OUT, AN INTERVIEWER ASKED US, 'HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT SELLING OUT?'"

"'Human' was definitely poppier and a bit more dance-oriented than the singles we'd previously released. When it first came out, an interviewer in Germany asked us, 'How do you feel about selling out?' I was really surprised, because, to me, selling out is playing music you don't believe in, in an attempt to gain popularity. I loved that song and that style, and it was just one of the styles we'd explored on the album. We're influenced by everyone from the Pet Shop Boys to Springsteen to Underworld, and any one of those influences can pop out at any given moment."

"THE QUEEN'S FINEST"
KEUNING — *PRISMISM* (2018)

"This has become my most streamed solo song so far. I had that opening arpeggio guitar lick for a while, and when I was recording my first solo album I decided to take it and develop it more. When I wrote it, it was kind of intuitive and I wasn't thinking about the underlying chords so much, but it's a fifth-position D5 to a G5/D, to an unusual voicing of a B minor triad on the 6th, 4th and 3rd strings, then back to the G5/D. I mapped the progression out, then put keyboards behind it, and the song kind of grew from there. This was a good example of just putting an idea down and seeing where it goes. The title doesn't necessarily relate to the lyrics; it's just something I called the original demo and decided to keep. The song also works with a solo acoustic arrangement, although it's challenging to sing and play at the same time. For the album recording, I used a hollow-body guitar called a Volaré, which is made by a company out of Iowa called BilT. I'm tuned down a half step, which is something I do a lot both with the Killers and on my solo stuff."

ROB SCOTT (TOP); KEVIN WINTER/GETTY IMAGES (2016)

PAINT YOUR TONE ALNICO

NEW Ruby

Purpose-built to create vintage tones, oozing a richly musical vintage warmth, with mellow highs and a smooth, sophisticated midrange. At 35-watt the Ruby is ideal for use with mid-powered amps and combos.

Cream

Effortlessly refined, with broad expressive mids and beautiful, balanced highs. Perfect for amps from 1-watt to 90-watt.

Blue

The ORIGINAL. Legendary alnico tone that sparkles and shines. 15-watt power handling.

Gold

Laid back attack with a modern edge for rolled off highs but a stronger punch. 50-watt power handling.

Upgrade to a Celestion Alnico speaker and expand your sonic palette with inspirational new tones. Find out more at celestion.com

Old Glory

This 1959 Epiphone Sheraton bears hallmarks of the company's earlier life as a premier American guitar maker.

ANY MENTION OF THE Epiphone brand today is likely to evoke thoughts of budget-friendly, overseas-made Gibson alternatives that have worn that badge for the past several decades. But the brand began as a seminal American guitar maker and one of the "big three" of the early archtop, alongside Gibson and Gretsch. The subject shown here hails from the earliest days of Gibson's ownership of Epiphone, a time when the maker's own distinctive features were still prevalent throughout the design. At first glance, this 1959 Epiphone Sheraton might look relatively familiar, yet a closer probe reveals a wealth of unusual details that hearken back to its glory days.

Only two decades earlier, Epiphone had been a premier brand serving the needs of volume-hungry jazz and dance-band guitarists with models that rivaled Gibson's preeminent archtops. But the war years were hard on Epiphone, and the company had difficulty recovering after the 1943 death of its president and namesake, Epaminodas "Epi" Stathopoulo. In the mid 1950s, Les Paul, who had originally developed his ideas for a solidbody electric guitar in the Epiphone workshops, suggested Gibson president Ted McCarty acquire the New York City–based company. In 1957, McCarty struck a deal with Epi's brother, Orphie, the majority shareholder, to purchase Epiphone for $20,000.

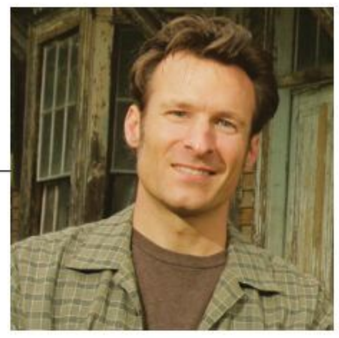
Gibson moved Epiphone production to its factory in Kalamazoo, Michigan, where guitars carrying the brand name began rolling off the assembly line in 1958. Although these used the woods and basic body shapes that the

ESSENTIAL INGREDIENTS

- > Semi-hollow thinline archtop body
- > Laminated maple top, back and sides
- > Five-piece neck with bound ebony fingerboard, 24.75-inch scale
- > Split-V block inlays
- > Frequensator trapeze tailpiece
- > Dual New York single-coil pickups

GUITAR AND PHOTOS COURTESY OF JAMES YOUNGJOHNS

BY DAVE HUNTER



very same craftsmen were applying to Gibson models of the time, many Epiphones of the first few years of production were fitted entirely with parts brought from New York after the acquisition. Such is the case with this stunningly clean and original 1959 Sheraton, Epiphone's top-of-the-line semi from the first year of its production. Even beyond the components, this ornate model bears the marks of Epiphone's glory years.

This Sheraton has the desirable short headstock that would be enlarged in 1964, adorned with a mother-of-pearl tree of life inlay that's much like those seen on upscale models of the 1930s, like the full-bodied Emperor archtop. Similarly, its ebony fretboard sports multi-ply purfling within the binding — something not even afforded Gibson's top-of-the-line semi, the ES-355 — along with elegant split-V position markers, with wedges of abalone inlaid within the

"IT HAS A LOVELY TOP-END SPARKLE. THE SPECIAL SAUCE IS DEFINITELY THE PICKUPS"

mother-of-pearl rectangles. A look round the back shows us that the glued-in neck is itself a laminated five-piece construction, a feature found on none of Gibson's semis of the era.

Although the Sheraton's body was a sibling of Gibson's new thinline semi-hollow ES range, its depth is a little shallower at the rims than some comparable ES-335s of the same year. Apparently built in early '59, this guitar's top is also made with the thinner laminated maple Gibson was using on its pressed-archtop models up until around the end of 1958, considered by many to be livelier sounding than the laminated stocks that followed. The woods used for this Sheraton also display a lovely, subtle flamed grain, and the guitar's lusciously rich "iced tea" sunburst finish continues around the rims, something not seen on its Gibson cousins. The neck profile is also different from anything found

The short headstock has a tree of life inlay.

on a Gibson of the era, a distinct "V" shape that owner James Youngjohns says is closer to shapes he has found on 1930s Gibson acoustic guitars.

Other distinctly Epiphone details include the pre-Gibson radio knobs, the elongated pickguard with "E" inlay and the two-tiered Frequensator trapeze tailpiece. The latter was a feature of many of the company's big pre-Gibson archtops, boasted of in promotional literature, and intended to balance out the tension of the bass and treble strings across the bridge. (Note that the bridge currently on this one is a replacement.)

Of all the distinctive components in evidence here, though, the pickups might just stand out the most, and obviously have the greatest impact on the Sheraton's unique voice. Dubbed NY, for New York, they are also leftovers from Epiphone's independent years. While often mistaken for early mini-humbuckers, they are actually single-coil units. "They're fairly low-output relative to Gibson's P-90s of the time," Youngjohns says, "but they're very clear and articulate. The closest comparison I could make is gold-foils, particularly in the treble response, although they also have quite a full bass. It's

The guitar sports Epiphone's earlier "radio" knobs.

The so-called New York pickup is a single-coil.

very easy to re-create that 1950s Barney Kessel sound you hear on recordings such as Julie London's 'Cry Me a River' using the neck pickup into an old tube amp.

"The New York pickups were quickly dismissed by the rock crowd, as they weren't going to push an amp into breakup the way a humbucker or even a P-90 would," Youngjohns adds. "But if you use pedals to do the heavy lifting, the NYs work really well for higher-gain music styles. Playing a modern indie/alternative repertoire on it, the Sheraton has a lovely top-end sparkle, and it retains far better individual note clarity than an ES-335 with similar gain. It's a really interesting variant on the 335 sound, and the special sauce is definitely the pickups."

In 1960 or early '61, Gibson replaced the Sheraton's leftover NY single-coils with its own mini-humbuckers. These are the guitars seen far more frequently through the years, as played by artists from John Lee Hooker to Liam Gallagher to Vampire Weekend's Ezra Koenig. Gibson shipping records from the era show that only 46 Sheratons were made in 1959 and a further 26 in 1960, so it's no wonder the seminal early configuration is rarely seen today.

BY JIM CAMPILONGO

Music to Feed the Soul

This might be the album I've listened to most in my life.

PIANIST FEDERICO MOMPOU was born in Barcelona, Spain, in 1893. Because of his basic shyness and reserved nature, he didn't perform publicly. Instead, he found his true destiny: composition. His music, though totally unique, is somewhat reminiscent of Erik Satie and has some shades of Debussy, but his own indescribable and unique voice always shines through brightly.

I initially discovered Mompou's music on the Decca album *Andrés Segovia Guitar*, where the virtuoso classical guitarist performs "Cuna," from Mompou's Suite Compostelana. This is part of the Mompou story for me. Since I was diving into the wealth of Spanish guitar composers — Enrique Granados, Francisco Tárrega, Fernando Sor, Isaac Albéniz and more — I came to realize Spanish composers created a music that called my name. Their music was easy for me to embrace, and the Spanish composers gave me a new lease on my guitar life. I immediately started a Federico Mompou dig, and when I discovered Mompou composed mostly for piano on piano, I was a bit surprised. His 1962 Suite Compostelana composition is the only work he wrote for guitar. In fact, he composed it for Segovia.

Meanwhile, Segovia's performance of "Cuna" became kind of an obsession for me. I'd share this piece with everyone I knew. I'd ask them, "What is this piece saying?" Most folks didn't get very specific. I contacted a knowledgable classical guitarist I knew, thinking he'd unravel the song's beckoning mystery. He told me, "It always rained where Mompou composed. This piece represents his wet environment." I found that unsatisfying. I still felt hungry for clarity. Me? I thought Mompou's "Cuna" would be the music I'd hear when my spirit left my body and shot into the universe shortly after my death, my spirit traveling through the high-voltage cosmos faster then light, toward a vast glowing serenity.

Or maybe "Cuna" is just a piece that articulates wetness? Kind readers, I don't know and who can say? Mompou? He passed away in 1987.

In 1974, at the age of 81, Federico Mompou recorded his compositions, playing solo piano for the Spanish label Ensayo. This five-record set *Mompou Interpreta Mompou* (also released on CD on Brilliant Classics) could be the music I've listened to the most in my entire life. It's indescribably sustaining.

Many of Mompou's works are short and sometimes sound like nursery rhymes, or even lullabies, but with an amazing depth. As I stated earlier, Mompou's music captures, almost wrangles, my imagination, and I would fall short of describing his music successfully. His music is nourishing, inspiring, and yet has an unobtrusive character that allows the listener to disengage. As when hearing the drone of wind chimes or the sound of birds chirping in the distance, one doesn't sit at the edge of the seat anticipating the upcoming sound. Federico Mompou's music is as uncorrupted as the sound of nature.

In addition to all this, this recording sounds wonderful. When playing *Mompou Interpreta Mompou* through my Dynakit pre-amplifier via my McIntosh power amp through my Klipsch speakers, I'm transported to 1974, with the (left-handed) Mompou playing a grand piano in my New York City apartment. It's my personal recital.

The five-LP box is hard to find, but the two-CD set is affordable and easily attainable. I highly recommend the music of Federico Mompou, where one can discover the abyss of their own imagination, or simply have the perfect music for a rainy day. Until then, visit YouTube and search for "Laura Snowden Performs Mompou Cuna" and "Federico Mompou plays Mompou Cançons i danses No. 1-2-3" for a pair of captivating performances of Mompou's music.

HIS MUSIC IS NOURISHING, INSPIRING, AND YET HAS AN UNOBTRUSIVE CHARACTER THAT ALLOWS THE LISTENER TO DISENGAGE

Jim Campilongo has 14 critically acclaimed instrumental records available on vinyl, CD and digital download at jimcampilongo.com.

Atlas Strummed

This restored and modified ’62 National Westwood “Map” puts a world of tone at your fingertips.

I WAS ALWAYS intrigued by the look of the National Westwood, also known as the Map due to its upper bout, which resembles the U.S. Eastern coastline. I imagined it would be unwieldy to play, and since the National guitar company practically went out of business in the mid ’60s, examples aren’t easy to find. Plus, the numerous iterations of the National brand — including Supro, Valpro, Dobro, Airline and Valco — make it difficult to know which brand and model would be best.

I finally bought the Map shown here, which was being restored and modified by my friend Ardy. This guitar started out as a single-pickup model 75 but was modified with a second pickup, along with some practical, if not clever rewiring. (VIsually, it looks to be a model 77, but that guitar has a third pickup, a piezo, hidden under the bridge.) Part of the restoration included covering some badly engineered routing and removing bumper stickers, which necessitated the groovy grey pewter refinish.

WEIRDO FACTOR

After the odd body shape, the Westwood’s weirdest aspect is an elegant black headstock with fancy script logo that, nevertheless, is shaped like Gumby’s head. The guitar was offered in many finishes and was later made of Res-O-Glass, just like the Montgomery Ward Airline guitar Jack White played with the White Stripes. But the rest of this guitar is purely practical and quite musical.

PLAYABILITY & SOUND

Made in Los Angeles, this beauty has a solid maple body and neck with 20 low-profile frets laid into a nice slab of rosewood. The C-shape neck feels friendly to my small paws, but it took me a while to get used to the nearly flat fingerboard. It was an easy adjustment, though, especially because it plays so darn fast.

The counterintuitive controls are another story. What looks like a three-way pickup selector on the lower bout is actually a three-way tone selector. The knob next to it is a master tone knob. The upper bout contains the volume controls for each pickup and a chicken-head pickup selector. Don’t have this as a backup to your Les Paul, because the knob layout is more confusing than driving in London. The hardware includes a screw to adjust the neck angle (why don’t all bolt-ons have this?) and Kluson tuners that still work smoothly.

While the neck pickup is warm, as expected, it can sound funky and skanky with the EQ selections. The bridge pickup is brighter than the neck, but never gets scratchy. Clean tone or with distortion, these old single-coils really rock and have a tone unlike any other I’ve heard.

VALUE

In its time, the Westwood sold for $175 to $225, about the same price as a Fender Stratocaster. Their resale value hasn’t kept pace with the Strat, however. These beauties are still relatively affordable at $1,500 to $2,500.

WHY IT RULES

David Bowie, Jack White and Dan Auerbach have played the Westwood, but it’s still obscure enough to look like a custom build. It’s also lighter than it looks (7.2 pounds), plays great and sounds unique.

Thanks to Ardy for saving this beauty from the dumpster. Visit Eastwood Guitars at eastwoodguitars.com to see the company’s great National tributes, and check out the new National Guitar at national guitars.com.

Got a whack job? Feel free to get in touch with me at rtcarleton@gmail.com. Who knows? Maybe I’ll write about it.

PHOTOS BY MAY YAM

NOAH TORRALBA

SHOW & TELL

Using open tunings and intimate observations, **Madison Cunningham** takes her own path to musical expression on *Revealer*, her new, third full-length release.

BY JOE BOSSO

MADISON CUNNINGHAM ACED her way through the whole "sophomore slump" thing in fine form with her second album, 2019's *Who Are You Now*. That sublime set of musically adventurous and startlingly personal songs enchanted music fans and critics alike, and went on to earn the iconoclastic singer-guitarist a Grammy nomination for Best Americana Album.

Music is therapy for the 25-year-old California native, and as suggested by the title of her sumptuous new album, *Revealer* (Verve Forecast), songwriting is her way of making sense of feelings. "I actually had the title right at the beginning," she explains, "so in many ways it was something of a guiding principle for me. As the songs came into form, the word sort of magnified itself as a through-line. I began to think of a revealer as being kind of a figure. It's the personality of grief, or maybe it illustrates how grief eliminates all the things that are bubbling under the surface."

She pauses as she runs that thought around in her head, and chuckles. "I just loved the word," she says. "I thought it was very beautiful."

Much of the grief that informed Cunningham's new music stemmed from the mid-2020 death of her beloved grandmother, and she processes her heartbreak amid soothing strings that wrap their way around her velvety voice on the stirring ballad "Life According to Raechel." Her anguish takes on a more steely and defiant form on "Hospital," a gritty indie-rock groover that boasts the kind of riotous

guitar riff that lodges inside your head and stays there. Cunningham has a crafty way of describing sensations without editorializing them, but they have a cumulative power, like on the bleary folk-flavored gem "All I've Ever Known," where she summons a grab bag of images and life experiences over a bobbling, hypnotic guitar figure that takes listeners through a series of looking glasses. Her love of the late-period Beatles graces the shifting time signatures of "Your Hate Could Power a Train," and on "In From Japan," she artfully marries musical theater with Jeff Lynne–style rock orchestration.

"On my previous record, I tried to make the statement 'I am a guitar player,' and I think that point was made," Cunningham notes. "I didn't veer from that idea too much on this album, but I wanted it to be a spectrum of things. I wanted the songwriting to shine through. Like with 'Life According to Raechel,' I never pictured it with guitar — I always heard it with strings. It was always about the song and the story I wanted to tell. It's one of my favorite songs on the record. I'm so proud of it."

With its highly intimate, yet relatable observations bathed in sophisticated, jazz-tinged folk rock, much of the music on *Revealer* conjures up another era. At the mention of Laurel Canyon legends Joni Mitchell and Crosby, Stills & Nash, Cunningham lights up. "Oh, definitely!" she says, with a laugh. "I would consider myself to be a student of those writers. I think they tapped into something that was just so prolific and profound. They didn't hide any of their emotions that went directly onto the page. I think they're very unapologetic about that, and I absolutely model my writing and career off of that."

Still, Cunningham points out that she's not about to be thought of as anybody's idea of a carbon copy. "I've always just wanted to fight for my own voice," she says. "I've gone through so many different iterations of my own sound to the point where I can say, 'Oh, yeah, I was highly influenced by so-and-so during that period.' I'm not shy about my influences. I can't hide them. But really, I just try to express my own identity in everything."

I read a recent interview with you in which you said you thought being called a female guitar player was "dumb." I agree. It's pretty silly people still talk this way, isn't it?

It is, but I should clarify my opinion. Gender has always been a non-issue, but culture has made it an issue. It's not that sexism is eradicated; that's still very much alive, and I don't know how long we're going to be working through that. So in that sense, it's not gone, and the conversation is just as important as it ever was.

But in my opinion, it's like, I get so tired of talking about it. I'm like, "Come on, guys. Let's do the work." If you love guitar, play guitar and be the best you can be. It doesn't matter what your DNA is. I guess in that sense, that conversation feels outdated, but it's still very relevant because there are still people who give me a hard time about it.

You started out playing Christian music. As you might know, a lot of non-Christians don't listen to Christian music. They think it's not meant for them. What are they missing?

I have to be careful, but I would say… not much. I'm very much on the outside of Christian music now, so I feel out of date. I grew up with it, but I left it when I was 17. I don't know. From what I gather, there aren't a lot of artists that exist in that world like there were some time ago. Now it's very much spiritual songs and worship-focus music, which have very specific purposes. It's for people who hold that faith.

Excluded from all of that is the beautiful gospel music that came out of the church. Aretha Franklin came out of the church. That's different to me. That's in a whole different echelon, with its own mission. But as for right now, like I said, I'm out of touch with that industry, although I can't say that there are songs being written for just the general person to grab onto.

Was there a gateway album that changed things for you? You've talked about *Abbey Road* having a dramatic impact on you. Was that a big one?

It was, because my ears were tuned to this perfect sort of alternative Christian style of music. The Beatles… this is going to sound funny: Their records were so offensive to me at first because there were so many moments where the guitar was out of tune. [*laughs*] I didn't understand the importance of sincerity and performance over perfection, and how those two things sometimes are mutually exclusive.

My ears had to mature, and the Beatles taught me so profoundly about what it means to actually perform and innovate, and how sound is often imperfect because perfection and progress can't happen at the same time. But that being said, the Beatles are perfect in my opinion. At the time, my ears weren't being challenged, and they were the first band that did that for me. It's funny: A lot of my favorite music — and I mean the stuff that absolutely transformed me as an artist — I didn't

NOAH TORRALBA

“IF YOU LOVE GUITAR, PLAY GUITAR AND BE THE BEST YOU CAN BE. IT DOESN’T MATTER WHAT YOUR DNA IS”

really like it at first. I had to sit with it. It's fascinating how that works.

Any other examples other than the Beatles?
Oh yeah. I mean, it's sad and I'm almost embarrassed to admit it, but when I first heard Radiohead, I was like, "Eh, I don't hear songs." Who on earth did I think I was to say that? [*laughs*] But that's just how I felt. And then something hit me, and I was like, "This is the best music I've ever heard!" The same can be said about Jeff Buckley and Björk and Fiona Apple. Now they're my favorite people. It just took me a minute.

You started playing the guitar quite young.
Yeah, I was seven years old.

Was there a time when you decided that you wanted to get really serious about playing? Did you sit down and put in the 10,000 hours?
Oh yeah. I started taking electric guitar seriously when I was probably 16. I was in a high school band, and I had played acoustic guitar, but I decided to make the switch to electric to match what was happening sonically in this band. It was frustrating, though, because the electric guitar required a different touch. I became very annoyed at how I sounded. It was like I had to learn guitar all over again.

From the ages of 17 to 22, that's when I practiced the most in my life, especially when I turned 21, because I got asked to do a bunch of gigs in L.A. I had started duetting with [*Nickel Creek and Punch Brothers mandolinist*] Chris Thile, and I couldn't afford to be anything but excellent on guitar. That was my goal.

During that period, what kinds of things did you practice?
It would depend. For a while, I was hanging with some friends in Orange County, and we would learn a song a week. One week it was something by Jimi Hendrix, and the next it would be John Scofield. The next it would be Led Zeppelin. We were just going through the coolest guitar players and playing them as best we could. I did a lot of listening. I listened to B.B. King…a lot of people. And I was transcribing songs. At the same time, I wrote songs and I would imagine what I wanted to hear myself play. Then I'd practice and practice, and I'd get to where I loved it.

You use a lot of open tunings. Where'd that come from?
A family friend named Danny Donnelly showed me open tunings when I was probably 12. Then when I was older and started listening to Joni Mitchell, I understood that she had been playing in open tunings for years. That's when I was like, "Oh… got it. That's how you do it." I started writing songs in open tunings at that age, when I was 16.

Was that a real watershed moment for your songwriting? Did open tunings facilitate your songwriting?
One-hundred percent. I mean, it was all a progression, and eventually all of my electric guitars got tuned down to C standard. I liked how they sounded. I still write songs in that sort of octave. I think open tunings opened up different melodic pathways for me; they just made more sense, and I could find more voicings that way. I don't really have a lot of theory in my background. I didn't go to school for guitar or

CLAIRE MARIE VOGEL

music. It's all just self-taught and discovery. A lot of the time, I follow my ear and intuition.

You're quite a good fingerstyle guitarist. Did you study other players?
A couple. Paul Simon, definitely. But the family friend I mentioned, Danny Donnelly, he was an incredible fingerpicker, and he's still one of my favorite guitar players. There's probably a few others, but Paul Simon was the big one.

You had a lot of time to work on this record during the pandemic. During that period, did you pick up the guitar more than usual?
I played a lot, but there were days when I didn't have the appetite for it. I didn't want to play; I just wanted to make meals and learn how to make pasta. [*laughs*] But yeah, I would say overall, the hours that I logged playing guitar were so much more than usual.

Let's get into the album a bit. There's a really cool, swirling guitar figure in "All I've Ever Known." On the record, is that a loop?
Nope. It sounds like it's a loop, but it's just me playing the part over and over.

I should have figured. I saw you play it during the NPR *Tiny Desk Concert* you did recently. You use a lot of upstrokes for that part.
I do. It's a lot of upstrokes and pull-offs. I'm pulling off the strings and using some of the open strings to get that sort of melodic pattern. It was hard to do for a minute. I got the guitar part first, and then the melody came later. I love playing something that has a rhythm flow underneath what I'm singing. It's become a part of my instincts now.

"Hospital" has a flat-out awesome rock riff. Riffs are hard, aren't they? You can labor over them, but the best ones come about because you're noodling around and you have an "aha moment."
Honestly, that's true. There's no math or calculation; it's really just me figuring stuff out. With "Hospital," it's funny because I was trying not to have a riff in the song. I wanted it to be all about just the melody and the song, nothing more. The riff just happened very naturally. I was playing and playing, and it just sort of slipped out. This happened a couple of times till finally I was like, "Okay, that's a thing." If you repeat it a couple of times, it's a riff.

The riff is almost classic-rock sounding. Tell me, what kind of rock music are you listening to?

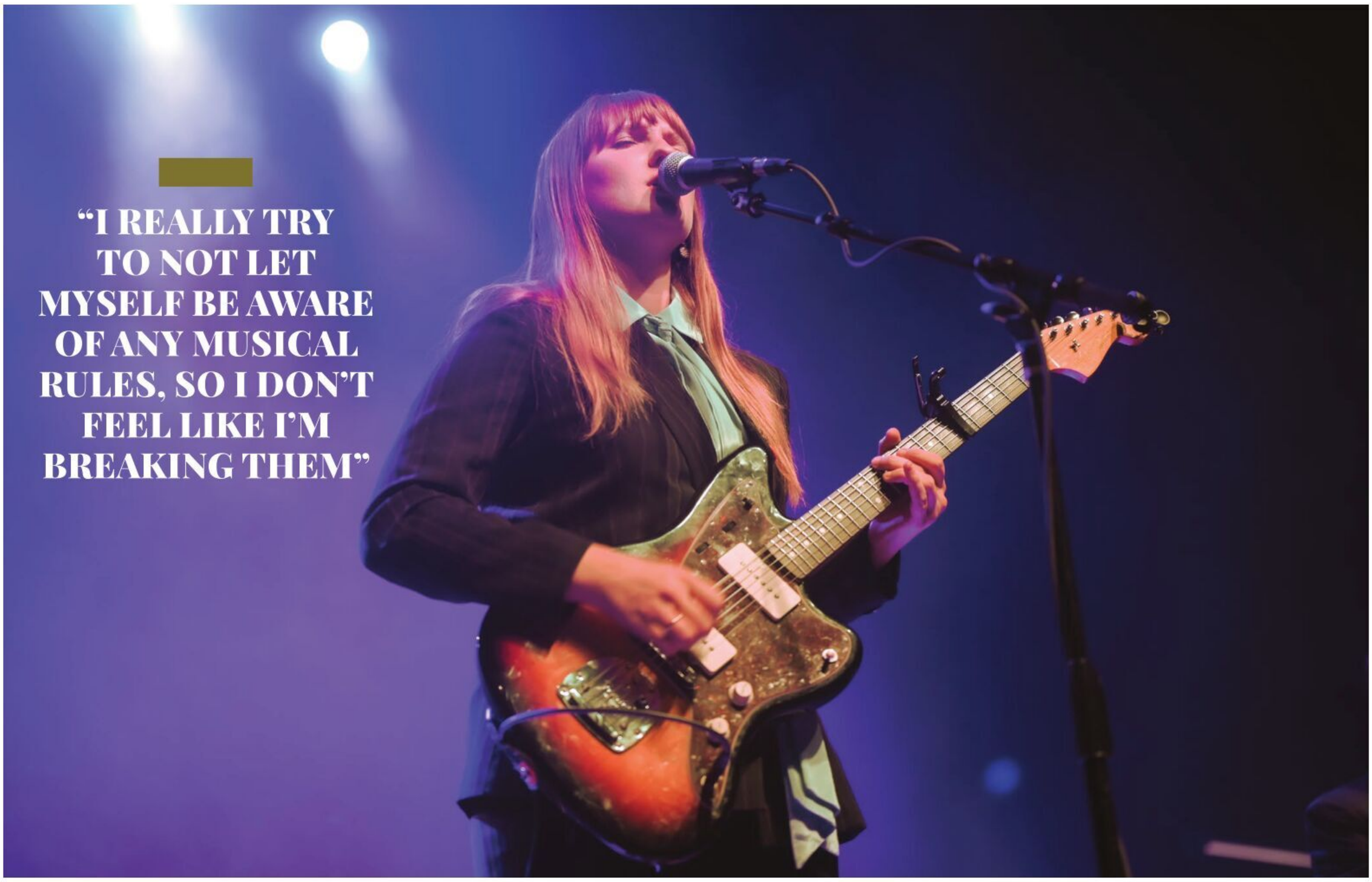
AR REED

Oh, well, like I said, Radiohead. I think they're the coolest version of rock. Let's see, what else? I really like Queens of the Stone Age.

Great grooves.
Absolutely. Everything they do is so deep. They're such a great, creative rock band. I mean, I've always loved Led Zeppelin. Those are some of the coolest song structures and guitar-centric stuff. Who am I forgetting? There's Wilco. I love Wilco! Oh, and Feist. I think she's rock in her own way. I look up to her a lot.

"Your Hate Could Power a Train" sounds like several songs mashed together.
It does, but it was all one idea. I had this weird riff that happened by accident. I was practicing something else, and I hit the wrong fret. I went, "Whoa, that's weird… but I kind of like it." Then I went after the bridge, which has a very open, half-time feel. After that, I filled in

"OPEN TUNINGS OPENED UP DIFFERENT MELODIC PATHWAYS FOR ME. THEY JUST MADE MORE SENSE"



everything else. We wanted it to sound like we had chopped it up and put a bunch of different songs together. So you're right, but the truth is, it all came together at once.

It's got such a jazz feel to it. You don't know what's going to come at you next.
[*laughs*] Yeah, that's cool. Well, it is a train, and it's taking some fast turns.

Are Fender Jazzmasters still your go-to guitars?
Yeah. My main one is a Mexican Jazzmaster reissue, but I have a couple of backups. I don't consider myself a Jazzmaster poster child, but I just love that guitar. It speaks to me. Every environment that I bring it into, it feels like me. It's like a very flattering jacket. You're always going to wear that jacket, even if it's too hot outside. [*laughs*]

What are your main amps right now?
I've been traveling with two Fender Deluxes, and I use both of them at the same time so I can get a cool 3-D sound. It sounds really nice and big.

You seem to like some effects pedals. What are you using?
It's all JHS at the moment. I have a custom pedal I made with them that's going to come out soon. It's called the Artificial Blonde. Even though I'm a real strawberry blonde, I kind of liked that name. It's basically a warble kind of tremolo thing that I keep on for every single song. It's got depth and speed, so you can change it around.

Other than that, I have a boost pedal that I use every once in a while. I have a tuner and a delay pedal that I use for short slap. I have been using a [*HexeFX*] Revolver pedal, which isn't JHS. It gives me a cool glitchy sound. I think that's about it.

I'm going to compliment you here. You're unique. You have your influences, but you distill them in a way that makes you sound different. It's in your songwriting, and it's definitely there in your guitar playing.
Thank you! Like I said, I have my influences, but I really try to find my own voice in everything. Especially as a guitar player — there's a lot of guitar playing that is just not exciting to me. And I also think that the lack of training in theory has allowed me to not care about rules that much. I really, really try to not let myself be aware of any musical rules, so I don't feel like I'm breaking them. I just want to keep the pathway as clear for me to create things that make me excited. That's it. That's all I care about.

NOAH TORRALBA

TAKE FLIGHT

ltd®

PHOENIX SERIES

GUITARS AND BASSES

With the LTD Phoenix, nothing will stop you from launching into your finest performances. Their neck-thru-body construction, stainless steel frets, and top-tier components allow you to soar through fluid lead lines, powerful riffs, and tight rhythms. Plus, the Phoenix will let you stand out from the crowd with its aerodynamic curves, and with 13 different guitars and basses to choose from, there's an LTD Phoenix for every player in every genre of music.

Get all the info on the LTD Phoenix Series guitars and basses at espguitars.com.

ESP®

ESPGUITARS.COM

BEING JOHN FRUSCIANTE

BY RICHARD BIENSTOCK

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JONATHAN WEINER

IN HIS MOST REVEALING INTERVIEW YET, the Red Hot Chili Peppers guitarist comes clean about his love of Eddie Van Halen, his attraction to clean tones and the importance of staying vulnerable.

Back in April 2022, the Red Hot Chili Peppers released *Unlimited Love*, their 12th studio effort and, more significantly, their first with John Frusciante, arguably their most fan-beloved guitarist, in more than 15 years.

IF SOME LISTENERS felt like they had waited a lifetime for this reunion album — and it's quite possible that a few younger ones actually had — they didn't have to hang on too much longer for the next one.

Rather, here we are just a handful of months later, and the Chilis — which also include singer Anthony Kiedis, bassist Flea and drummer Chad Smith — have now followed up the 17-track, hour-plus *Unlimited Love* with the similarly 17-track, hour-plus *Return of the Dream Canteen* (Warner Records). The new record is culled from material recorded during the same sessions as its predecessor, at producer Rick Rubin's Shangri-La Studios in Malibu, California, with Rubin at the helm. At the time, Frusciante had only recently returned to the band for a second tour of duty. After cementing his legacy with star-making performances on 1989's *Mother's Milk* and 1991's breakthrough *Blood Sugar Sex Magik*, he exited the band for the first time in 1992, returning in 1999 for three critically lauded and incredibly successful efforts, including that year's 15-million-plus-selling *Californication*.

Given that, this time, the Chili Peppers entered the studio with a clutch of ideas and came out with not one but two new albums — and double albums at that — it can be surmised that Frusciante's return has borne plenty of fresh creative fruit. As the band has headed out on the road to play the new music and the classics onstage, that renewal has only continued.

"Aside from one or two shows in smaller places, all these shows have been a size that we've never done before," Frusciante says. "We've been playing stadiums that are generally between, like, 40 and 60 thousand people a night. It's a lot of people, and the energy's very intense. There's so much happiness being generated from the audience that sometimes it's overwhelming."

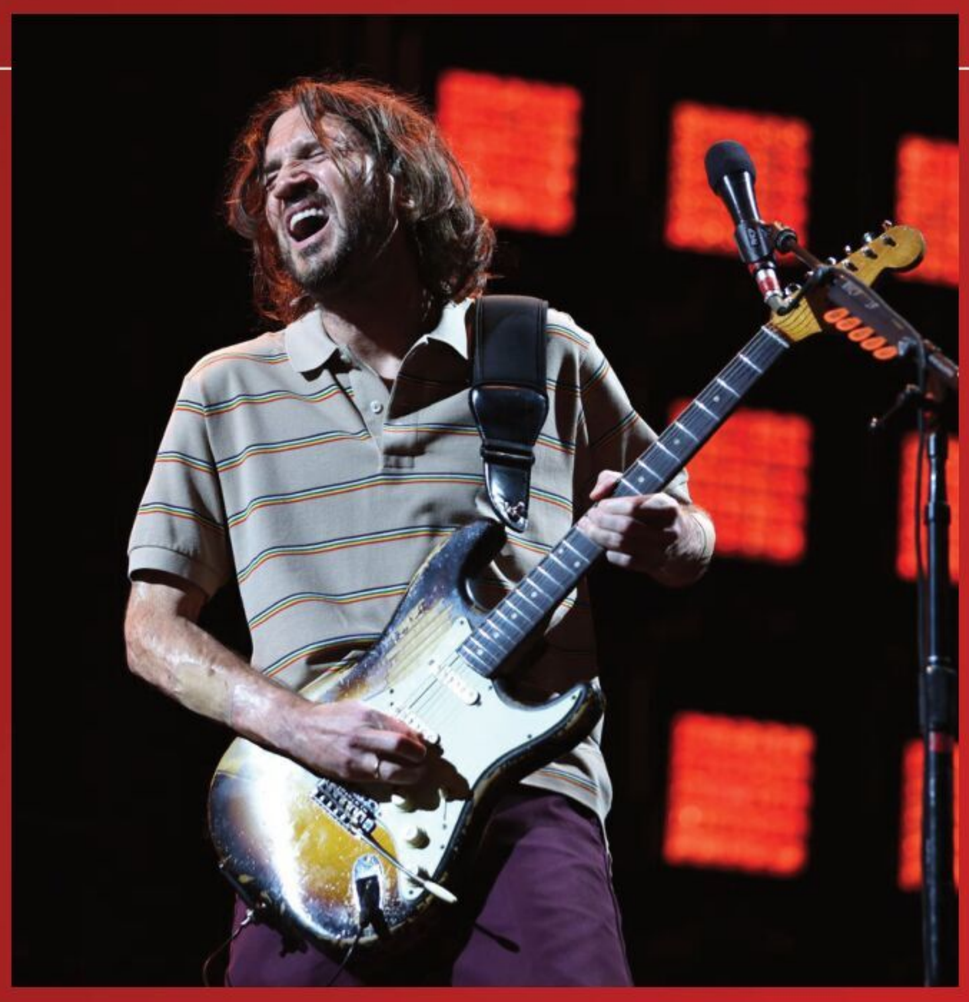
Nevertheless, Frusciante's guitar playing has remained rock solid and unshakeable, not to mention mind-bendingly awesome. Now 52 years old, he evidences the same beautifully idiosyncratic playing style — the elastic, slinky rhythm work; the alternately fluid and furious chording; the feedback-drenched, acid-fuzz solo freak-outs; the inspired improvisations; and the almost telepathic instrumental interactions with Flea and Smith — that made him an alt-rock guitar hero at the tender age of 21. But everything feels both heightened and boundless. There's an increased focus and intensity, and also what appears to be a greater willingness to let loose and take his playing right to the edge. "It's beautiful when you feel like somebody's putting themselves out there and taking a risk and just barely holding on, and it could become terrible at any moment if they lose it," Frusciante says. "I love the openness of that."

In a wide-ranging interview with *Guitar Player*, Frusciante spoke about that openness, as well as the many aspects of his playing style and practice regimen that have helped make him the player he is today. He also took us inside *Return of the Dream Canteen* and the creation of some of its standout tracks, and discussed how he employs technical facility and knowledge of theory in the service of making an emotional connection on his instrument. "It's the vulnerability that I think is most appealing," he says.

Since your return to the Red Hot Chili Peppers, the band has written and recorded close to 50 songs and released two albums. That's a significant amount of studio work. But you also returned to the stage with the band. How has it been to perform with Anthony, Flea and Chad again?

It's a real different experience, just because of the size of the stadiums. It pulls a lot out of you, especially because I came back into the band in a spirit of giving. I really wanted to play for people, you know? But when we made the records, it was more about playing for the other guys in the band, or playing something that I'd want to play for my friends. But going out onstage, there's times where I go up to the mic to sing and I make eye contact with people, and I see two people that are clearly in love and really happy to be there, or a little kid who's really happy, or a young girl who's jumping up and down, or a group of guys that are jumping around in a circle because they're so happy that we played the particular song that they really like. Sometimes those moments, I start crying. Or I get choked up and I can't sing and I have to shut my eyes and stare down at the ground and collect myself.

“I felt after making *Mother’s Milk* that I wasn’t supporting the songs and my bandmates as well as I could have”



Frusciante performs at Nashville's Nissan Stadium, August 12, 2022.

That's intense.
There's a lot of emotional moments like that. And I don't know that in the band we've ever been so appreciative of being there with each other before. Because we have this lifetime behind us of these meaningful moments playing together. It's very important to us. We all feel very supported by each other.

One very cool aspect of these shows it that you, Flea and Chad begin the set with an instrumental improvisation. When you're dealing with audiences in venues of this size, the goal of a rock band is usually to hit the stage and blow the fans' hair back. But you guys approach the music in a more open and creative way.
Yeah. It's a good way to really get in touch with the particular energy that's there that night. Because every crowd is different and every venue feels different, and we're also in a different mood every night. So by improvising right at the beginning, we get in touch with what the spirit of the moment is, and oftentimes that sets the tone for the rest of the show. And you know, throughout the show there's lots of spontaneity. Every time there's a solo, whether it's a song that we don't play often or a song that we play every night, I feel really creative in those moments. Every second on the stage feels worthwhile.

"Vulnerability is one of the most endearing things to hear in a piece of music"

***Return of the Dream Canteen* is culled from songs recorded during the same sessions as *Unlimited Love*. When you were in the studio, did you have an idea of which songs would ultimately wind up on which record?**
I definitely gave it a lot of thought, but it really came down to what order we decided to mix the songs in. I had my own personal idea of what would make a good second album and what would make a good first one, but I didn't feel so strongly about it that I took the trouble to go to the band and say, "Look, guys, before we mix anything, let's make this decision right here and now." I planned on doing that, but I just never did. It seemed like the way it went was sometimes Anthony would suggest mixing a particular song, sometimes I would, sometimes maybe Flea would. And we just kind of trusted that whatever was going to be was going to be. There really was no conscious idea about what the difference between the two albums should be.

That said, there were certain songs that I felt should wait for the second album. Like "Eddie": I really wanted to put that one on the second album, because I felt like it might be kind of a crowd pleaser. And we didn't want the first album to be all the best stuff and the second one to be the leftovers. So there were certain songs that, even though other people wanted to mix them, I said, "Let's save that one."

Now that the two records are out, do you notice certain defining characteristics of each one?
Before we started mixing *Unlimited Love* and *Return of the Dream Canteen*, the band had the basic idea that we would try to cover the essential bases with the first record, and the second record would be the more eccentric, adventurous one. But in several cases we contradicted this by saving certain staples for record two and putting some of the more unexpected things on record one. We decided in advance what the first and last song would be on each record, but the rest we figured out as we went along.

As it turned out, I hear *Return of the Dream Canteen* as a more fun record, and I think it goes to further extremes. This one has a more colorful, kind of "bright" thing to it. Not that it doesn't have dark sections. But to me, *Unlimited Love* seems darker. The new one also maybe has more surprising elements. There's a little bit of that on the first album, too, but especially on the second half of this one, there's probably more synthesizers and drum machines and stuff like that than people might expect from us. And it also feels more off the cuff and spontaneous. There's a certain feeling of relaxedness and looseness that distinguishes *Return of the Dream Canteen* from *Unlimited Love*.

You mentioned the *Return of the Dream Canteen* song "Eddie," which is clearly a tribute to Eddie Van Halen, especially in regard to Anthony's lyrics. While the music doesn't much reflect the Van Halen sound, you incorporated some overt EVH flourishes into your solo — tapping, whammy-bar work, unique phrasings. What was your intention going into that one?

JASON KEMPIN/GETTY IMAGES

When we're in the studio and between takes, I'm always doing things, like two-handed tapping. The engineers hear it all the time; I'll play really flashy stuff during breaks. But when it comes to recording, I'm doing what I think is right for the song, and in most cases that doesn't involve playing really flashy. But it is something I enjoy.

Still, doing that solo was a mind fuck, I'll tell you that. And it was the last solo that I did out of all the solos on the 48 songs we recorded. I saved it for last, because the idea of having a song about Eddie Van Halen, you're basically saying to people, "Think about Eddie Van Halen." And then when it comes to this long guitar solo at the end, you're going, "Now watch this!" And I did not like that idea. I was even thinking of cutting the solo entirely, because I did not know how to go about it. I was trying for a while, and I wasn't happy with anything I was doing. I was either going too far in the Eddie Van Halen direction, to where it was too busy and there was too much two-handed tapping and it didn't sound like me, or I was just doing it and it only sounded like me… in a song about Eddie Van Halen.

How did you find a happy medium?

I just turned my mind off and stopped thinking about it. I stopped being self-conscious about the idea that the song was about Eddie Van Halen and just did what was natural. We were recording, and I took maybe a 15-minute break. And when I came back in, I just did the whole thing, like I said, in one take. Whatever Eddie Van Halen is in there, it's just there because of my love for him and the love that I've felt for his playing since I was eight years old — things like the fast tapping and accentuating different notes with the vibrato bar. He did that a lot.

And then there are also the parts of his style that don't involve playing fast, that are just really exciting to me — playing in a way that feels spontaneous, or when you hear feedback because he recorded his parts in the same room as his amplifier. To this day, those things give me chills. Like, this is real, what's happening here. This isn't some guy standing in the control room punching in. This is a guy going out on a limb and taking risks. Throughout both of these albums, I tried to do a lot of that.

Anthony Kiedis, Flea and Frusciante perform at Allegiant Stadium in Las Vegas, August 6, 2022.

As far as the hallmarks of your style, one thing that has always stuck out to me is your use of space. You hear it on songs like "Eddie" and "Shoot Me a Smile" on the new album, and also in some of the band's classic tracks, like "Scar Tissue" as well as "Californication." Another obvious one would be "Otherside," where, for much of the rhythm track, you're playing maybe two or three notes. Where does that approach come from?

It really comes from trying to figure out what I can do that makes Flea and Chad sound as good as they can. Back in the time of *Mother's Milk*, I was trying to fill up more space and it just sounded too busy. It wasn't as busy as Flea, but Flea has a way of being busy on the bass that never sounds too busy. It always sounds like he's doing what he's doing in support of the song. I felt after making that record that I wasn't supporting the songs and my bandmates as well as I could have.

"When I was a teenager, I would wonder 'What is it that I have to say that's different from anybody else?'"

That began to change on the follow-up, *Blood Sugar Sex Magik*.

Another thing there was that Rick Rubin, when he started producing us at the *Blood Sugar* time, he kept adding ideas to the arrangements. Like, "Have no guitar for the first verse," or, "Have no bass for the second verse." He came from this hip-hop experience, so he was essentially muting the instruments in certain sections. That was inspiring for me, because I was already going in the direction of playing less and seeing how much better that made the band sound as a whole. So I just got to a point where I really saw the musical value of space of all types, whether it's the distance between one point in the bar line and another point in the bar line, or the distance between two sounds, in terms of using wide intervals or creating a chord out of me playing one note on my guitar and Flea playing one note on his bass. It just seemed to make the band feel more whole. And to be honest, the other guys liked it when I started playing that way, and I felt supported.

You also employ intervals, and particularly wide intervals, in a very unique way.

I think a lot of people play guitar a certain way, and it may be because they're just playing with bass players who play simple root-note bass lines. But because Flea plays in such an interesting way, I think of intervals not only as the relationship between two notes on my instrument but as the relationship between what I'm doing and what he's doing.

Take something like the intro to "By the Way" or the verses of "Otherside": I'm not thinking of my guitar as the center of it; I'm thinking of my guitar as a portion of it. I'm thinking of the pitch of Flea's bass line and the pitch of my guitar. If Flea's playing a note and I'm playing a note, we've got a two-note chord right there. And the interval is the space between that. So then it's like, "How can I move in a way that's different from how he's moving?" If he goes down, maybe I go up. And we start creating different little harmony things where we imply chords without either of us playing the whole chord, that kind of thing. Or there's things like "Scar Tissue," where I'm doing those wide, two-note intervals on my own, but I'm really thinking of it as two separate parts.

Sonically, your use of space is complemented by the fact that you're incredibly comfortable incorporating fully clean tones into your rhythm and lead work.

For me, it's really about being punchy. That's more important than distortion. Distorted guitar often sounds pretty wimpy to me. Even if the person's got a rich, thick tone, if the way they're hitting the instrument isn't exciting and punchy, it doesn't do anything for me.

What inspired your attraction to clean tones?

A lot of the basis for my guitar playing, stylistically, is in music that I loved when I was a kid that I've always continued to love. There's a lot of post-punk stuff, or what we now call post-punk stuff. Back then we called it new wave. But it's guys like Ricky Wilson from the B-52's and Matthew Ashman from Bow Wow Wow. Bands like the Cure and Scritti Politti and the Minutemen. The Pop Group is a really weird one, but I think they were some real originators, and the guitar playing is really good. All these people and bands did really powerful things with clean tones.

You listen to D. Boon's playing in the Minutemen and you really hear what I'm talking about. He'll rip into a solo, and the tone is clean as can be. But it's got more power than a heavy-metal guitar player, just because he cares so much and he's putting so much soul and feeling into the thing. And Ricky Wilson, the first show I ever saw that was in a big place, like a 5,000-seater, was the B-52's. This was in '83. And

ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

his guitar playing was just incredible. Like, it made people happy. And I'm really about the emotional response. For me, it's more about reaching people than it is about wanting to say, "Look at how big and tough and macho I am."

All that said, you can also conjure some truly thick and gnarly tones when the song calls for it. The chords you're playing in the chorus of "Reach Out," on the new album, would be a good example. Or, solo-wise, the fuzz-and-feedback frenzy in "The Heavy Wing," on *Unlimited Love*. How did you achieve those sounds?

A lot of times it's from using more than one distortion pedal at a time. I generally have a Boss distortion pedal on — the yellow [*OD-3 OverDrive*] or the orange [*DS-1 Distortion*] one — and also an Electro-Harmonix Big Muff or that brown MXR distortion pedal [*the Super Badass Variac Fuzz*]. It seemed like I used those a lot on the records. I can't remember specifically what pedals I used where, but I'd say a lot of the time I'm combining different distortions and fuzz tones.

So it's that, and then it's also having the Marshalls really loud and being in the same room with them. Because even when you're not getting feedback, when you're right there in front of a loud amp, there is a form of feedback going on that contributes to the sense of the sound being kind of super blown-out. I think the fact that almost all the distorted solos were done with me in the same room as the amp contributes to the tone in its own way.

Even with all of this focus on technique and sound and gear, the crux of your guitar playing is in the emotional content. How do you manage to play from your heart rather than your brain?

God, that's a good question, and a hard one to answer. I feel like all that conflict took place in me between the ages of 14 and 18, and after that I learned the lesson. And luckily my brain was developing while I was learning that lesson. But during those years when I was learning it, I had all kinds of conflicts.

But once I got to the point where I felt I could pretty much play whatever I wanted to learn, it was a very exciting period for me. But there was also that question in my mind of "What is it that I have to say?" Because I was so in love with all these different people who made vastly different types of music, and guitar players who were also so different from one another. And it seemed to me that each one had their own little place in saying something that was different than what the other one was saying. Even people who were kind of similar, like Randy Rhoads and Eddie Van Halen, to me they were saying completely different things. And so when I was a teenager, I would wonder about those things, like, "What is it that I have to say that's different from anybody else?"

How did learning theory play into that?

My understanding of theory was a way for me to be able to analyze the things that I liked. So if I was playing along with, say, the guitar solo in "Something" by the Beatles, and there's certain notes that [*George Harrison*] plays that make me go, "Wow, what the hell was he thinking? Why did he go from that note to that note? Why does it feel so good when he does it?" — I'm able to look at those notes in relationship to the chords and the intervals and so on and figure it out. So for me, the purpose of knowing the theory is to have an understanding of why I'm feeling a particular emotion.

It's interesting that you utilized theory as a means of tapping into your emotions. It's sort of the opposite of how many people think about it, which is that a reliance on theory can result in a clinical and cold approach to the instrument.

Well, I think a lot of the time people want to sound confident on their instrument. But to me, vulnerability is one of the most endearing things to hear in a piece of music. And I realized it felt like I was giving more of myself if I was vulnerable on the instrument. That ties into using the clean tones, to doing things that are understated, all these things. And I think that's universal. As much as we admire confidence in people, we all know deep down that vulnerability is one of the hardest things to achieve. And any little degree that you can allow yourself to be more vulnerable, with your friends or with your partner or with your playing, it's one of the strongest things you can do.

I would say that's a through-line in most of the guitarists you cited as influences in your youth.

As far as me having those thoughts when I was a kid about what do I have to say to people with my guitar playing, I feel like a lot of what I've wound up having to say has to do with vulnerability. It has to do with being supportive of other people, and also putting yourself out there in a way that's scary sometimes. It's that thing where it feels like your heart's too much out there and people could stomp on it, but also that you're okay with that, you know?

THE JOHN FRUSCIANTE WORKOUT

Get your fingers and brain in sync with the exercises John uses before every gig.

EVERY GUITARIST LOVES to play. But not every player loves to practice. John Frusciante loves both.

"I love the guitar, and I really love practicing," he says. "I do it just for practicing's sake. I always have. I don't do it because I'm trying to get faster or because I think it's going to make me smarter or anything like that."

For Frusciante, the benefits of practice are considerably bigger-picture. "It gets my mind straight in the morning," he says. "And it tunes me to myself — my fingers to my body, my body to my mind. A lot of what I do is brain exercises as much as physical exercises." The only thing he doesn't like about practicing? Not having enough time to do it. "When I'm at home, I can do it leisurely. But sometimes on tour I get rushed, and it feels like a job. When we're playing shows, I try to spend the maximum amount of time I can practicing, every day."

Frusciante was gracious enough to run through a handful of the exercises that make up his daily practice regimen when he's on the road with the Red Hot Chili Peppers. Sit back, relax, and carve out some time — two, four...10 hours, perhaps — to try them for yourself. — *RB*

1. HIT THE SCALES!

"The very first thing I do is a scale exercise where I play four notes in every permutation of order, using all four fingers. It goes like this, where each number represents your first, second, third and fourth finger: 1, 2, 3, 4; 1, 2, 4, 3; 1, 3, 2, 4; 1, 3, 4, 2; 1, 4, 2, 3; 1, 4, 3, 2. Each of those starts with the first finger. Then you do all the ones that start with the second finger: 2, 1, 3, 4; 2, 1, 4, 3; 2, 3, 1, 4; 2, 3, 4, 1; 2, 4, 1, 3; 2, 4, 3, 1. Then you move on to the ones that start with the third finger, and so on. And there are a lot of variations on it: You can divide: You can do the first two digits on one string and do the other two digits on another string. You can do it backward. You can hold any random chord and do every permutation of each finger on every note of that chord as an arpeggio. It's a real interesting exercise.

"Also, with all the initial scale exercises I do, I'm not adding any accents. That's something I picked up from Bill Bruford. He has a practice routine that he does on the drums, and he said he starts out with no accents and gradually brings them in. I find that's a really good approach."

2. DIVIDE AND CONQUER

"Next I do scales where I don't play the notes in order. I have these ways of dividing up the pitches in groups of different numbers, like seven or five or six, and then doing these jumps. You kind of have to keep active all the time because you're doing them in different ways, like four notes to the string, or three notes to the string, or two notes to the string.

> **"A lot of what I do is brain exercises as much as physical exercises"**

"I can go on for hours with scales, doing a lot of creative things, like accenting in fives but playing notes in groups of, say, seven. That's always fun. You can even just take four notes, play the same four notes over and over, but play accents in three and watch where the accents go. It creates all these interesting patterns. Where the accents wind up has a mathematical precision that's pretty illuminating when it comes to just understanding the nature of music."

3. À LA MODES

"What I find to be a good exercise is to, say, start with what you think of as A Dorian [*A - B - C - D - E - F♯ - G*], starting on the fifth fret, but think of it as E Aeolian [*E - F♯ - G - A - B - C - D*]. Think of the Es in that position as being your center, rather than the As. And then stay in the same position, but go to E Phrygian [*E - F - G - A - B - C - D*], and then E Mixolydian [*E - F♯ - G♯ - A - B - C♯ - D*]. Again, stay in the same position. You'll start to see the mode as being whatever you're calling it out as. I think it's a really good exercise for your brain. I also bring this Nicolas Slonimsky book, *Thesaurus of Scales and Melodic Patterns*, on tour with me. I pick up little things from that, and those have been added to my exercises."

4. PLAY WELL WITH OTHERS

"So that's where I start. And hopefully by the time I get to the gig, about four hours before we play, I'm warmed up enough to start playing along with other people's music. And lately, on days of shows, I'm not learning any new solos or new songs — I'm playing along with songs that I know, where I'm confident I won't make many mistakes, if any at all. That's another way of tuning myself to myself. So I play solos that I know all the way through and that aren't too challenging. If I'm feeling really good at the end of the whole thing, I might play along with something that's a little speedier, like [*Ozzy Osbourne's*] 'Over the Mountain.'

"But in general, what I'm trying to do is get my bends in place and get my vibrato in place and get my rhythm playing in place. I have something like 12 Frank Zappa instrumentals that I play

along with, and they go in the order of how difficult they are. They're not the most difficult ones, but they're good because they get my fingers moving in ways that aren't conventional. These are things I played when I was a teenager all the time, but I relearned them just before we went on tour. I play certain Jimi Hendrix songs, certain Jeff Beck ones, Mott the Hoople's 'Sucker,' Jethro Tull's 'Aqualung.' Cream covers like 'Sitting on Top of the World' or 'Born Under a Bad Sign' are good to start with, because they have a lot of space. You do a little bending and vibrato and sliding, and all those little techniques that are in there, and you rest your hand while Jack Bruce is singing. Then you come back in and do the next one. Those warm you up better than you would think."

5. PUNK IT UP

"In between the lead stuff, I'll play along with punk, generally because things like the Germs or the Ramones are really good for your rhythm playing. The Ramones songs all use downstrokes. I'll start with one that's a little slower, like 'Beat on the Brat,' and then move on to most of the other songs from the first few albums, where you have to play really fast. I just try to stay relaxed and make sure the downstrokes are coming from my wrist and not from my arms or shoulders. If I start to feel myself getting stiff, I don't go any further. I move on to something easier. And then the Germs have a lot of upstrokes, but it's fast, so that's good. Depending on what mood I'm in that day, I also might play along with Bow Wow Wow, because Matthew Ashman's rhythm guitar playing is really good."

6. HAVE A SOAK

"I also soak my hands in this thing that's used to cook meat — a sous vide machine, which heats up water to a high temperature. I had heard Allan Holdsworth didn't warm up; he just soaked his hands in what he described as boiling water. I'm sure it wasn't boiling, but it was probably pretty hot. But I had mentioned this to Henry, my guitar tech, when we were making the record. I wanted to be able to relax my hands in between takes, because you sit there playing the same thing over and over when you're doing the basic tracks. So we started using the sous vide machine. I started with it at 114 degrees Fahrenheit, but now I'm setting it to about 118. If I feel any tension at all, I soak my hands and my forearms for anywhere from 30 seconds to 10 minutes, depending on what I feel I need. I do that over and over for the four hours before we go onstage, at different times during my warm-up."

7. TAP 'N' TRILL

"On top of all of this, I do other stuff that oftentimes doesn't even come into play live, but it's really good for me to do. Like, two-handed tapping is really good for warming up my left hand, as well as getting my right hand ready in case I do decide to do it onstage. That's something that, if you do it fast enough, you can tense yourself up pretty quickly. If that happens, I'll stop, soak my hands and come back to it again. It's the same thing with trilling. I'll do that between two fingers in every position I can think of, anywhere on the fretboard. I find that about five minutes of that really makes a big difference."

8. TAKE YOUR TIME

"Ideally I'd love to play for 10 hours before I go onstage. But most often, I'm really happy if I get in at least a couple hours of warming up in the morning, doing the exercises and stuff, and then maybe four hours at the gig, which includes eating and getting dressed. If I only have two hours total to practice, just due to traveling or whatever, I'm very unhappy with that. I don't like having to jam it all into that short of an amount of time. It feels more like a job at that point. But practicing, I like for it to feel like something that I'm leisurely enjoying."

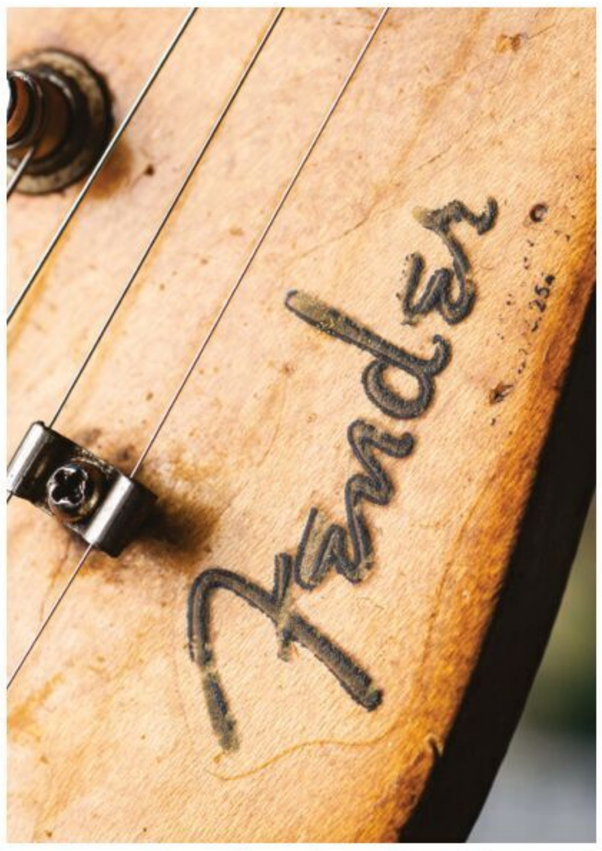
RED-HOT GUITARS

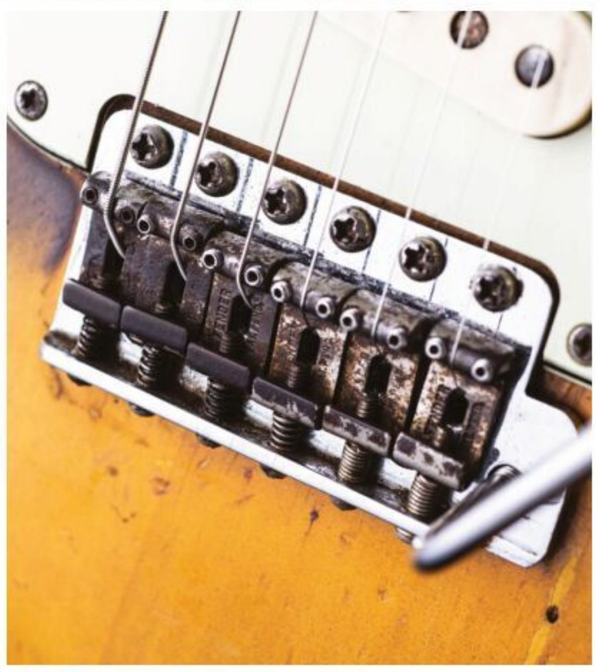
Guitar Player tags along to the Chili Peppers' October 9 gig in Austin for a first-hand dive into seven guitars behind the group's hits. John Frusciante's tech, **Henry Trejo**, and former tech **Dave Lee** fill in the details.

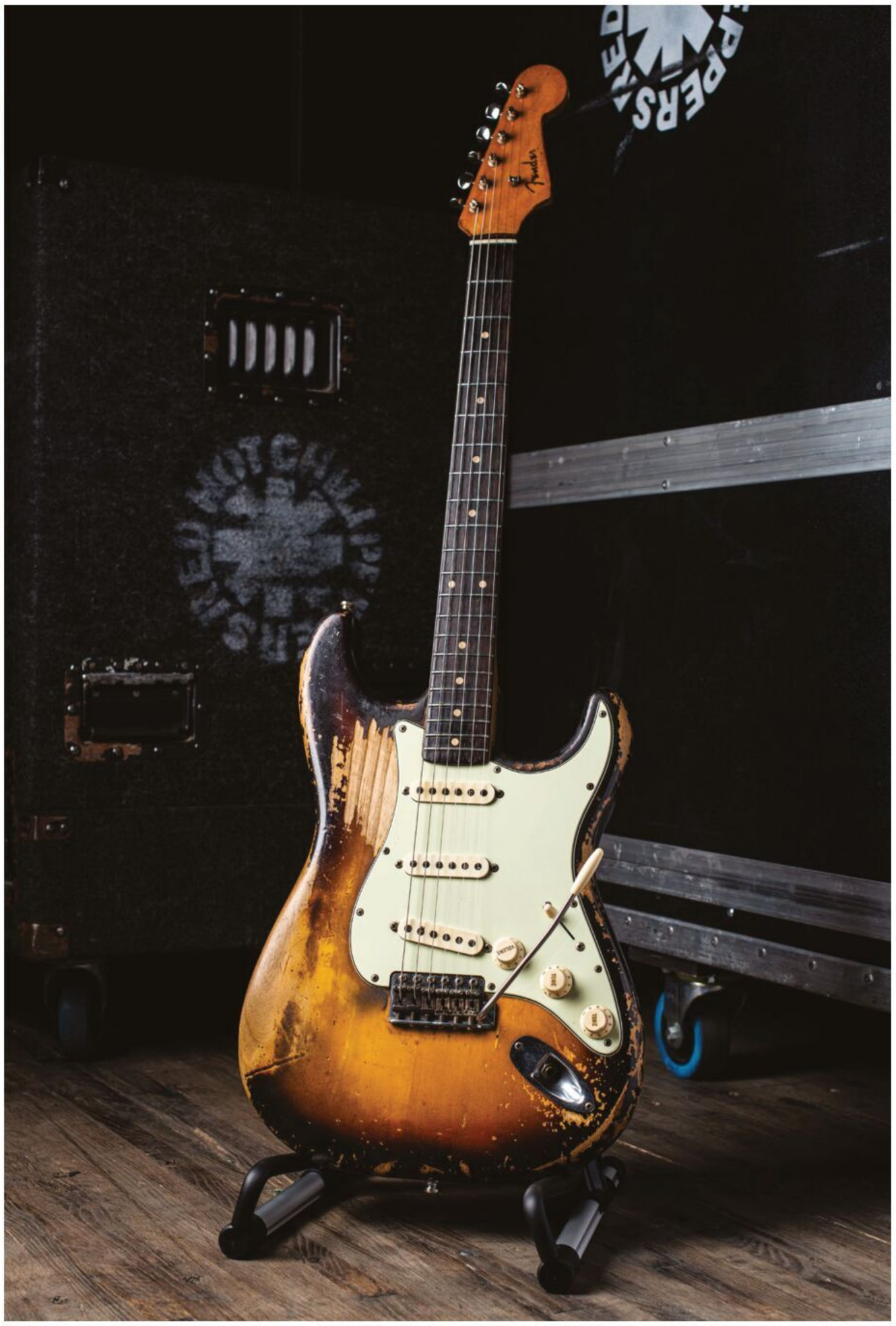
PHOTOGRAPHY BY ELEANOR JANE

Olympic White 1964 Fender Stratocaster

Fiesta Red 1961 Fender Stratocaster







1962 Fender Stratocaster

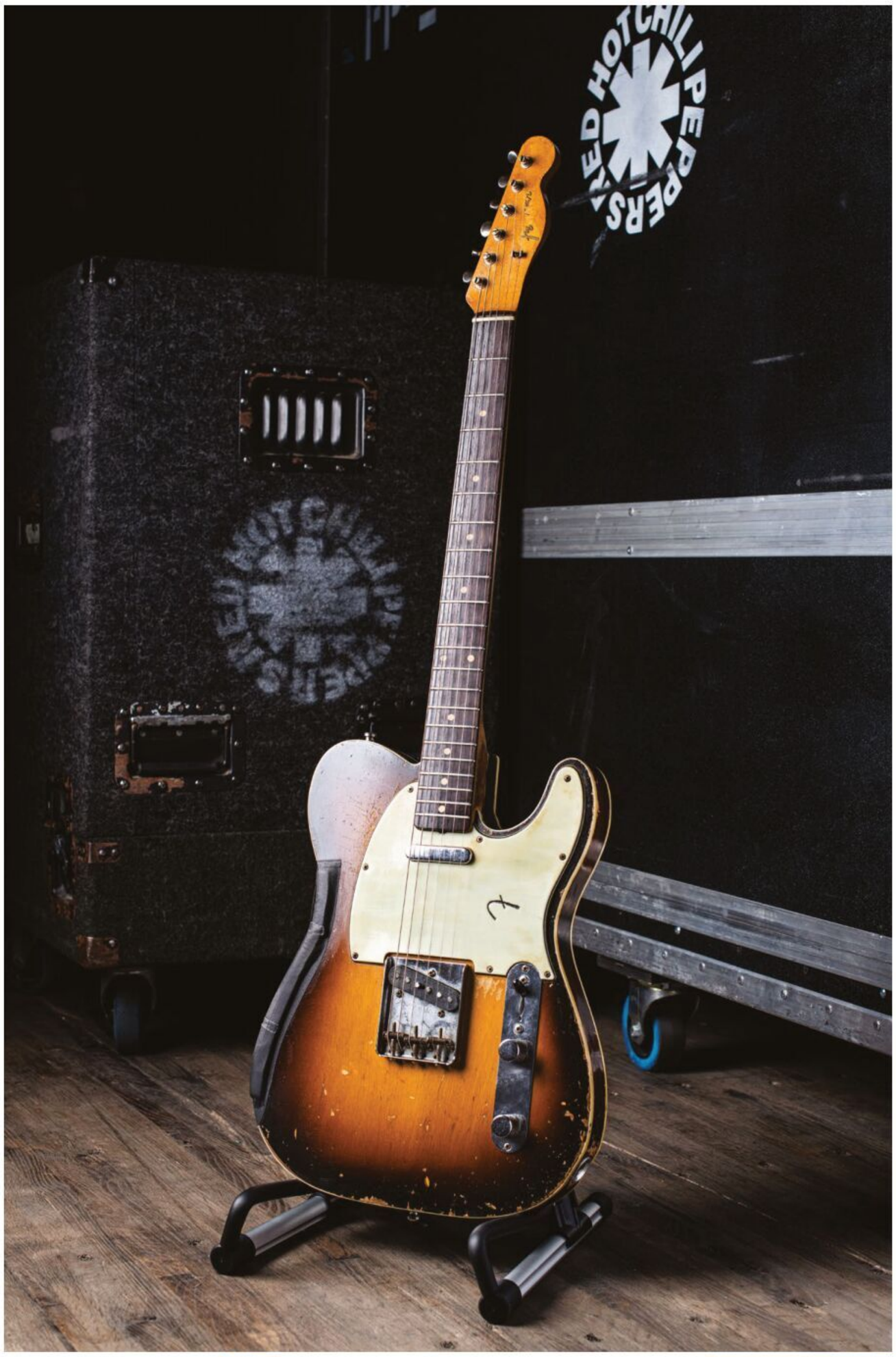
HENRY TREJO This Strat was a big part of the two new albums. It was pretty much John's main guitar for the bodies of most of the songs, if not all of the songs. Whenever he would do solos or really heavy parts he would use a different guitar, but the '62 is the meat and potatoes of everything you hear.

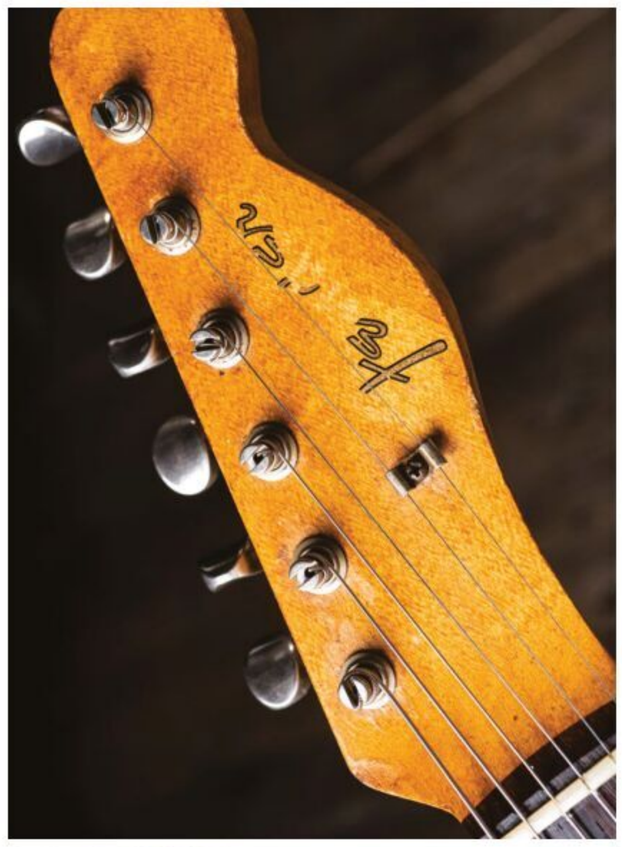
DAVE LEE I seem to recall the '62 first showing up during the *Californication* sessions. John had just come back to the band, and he did a few shows with them before they started writing and recording the record. I don't think he had this guitar yet. I remember him only having the '55 Strat, which was the only guitar he wanted to play. Then we got this one and he used it a lot on that record. When he got ready for the tour, it was one of the main ones we took out with us.

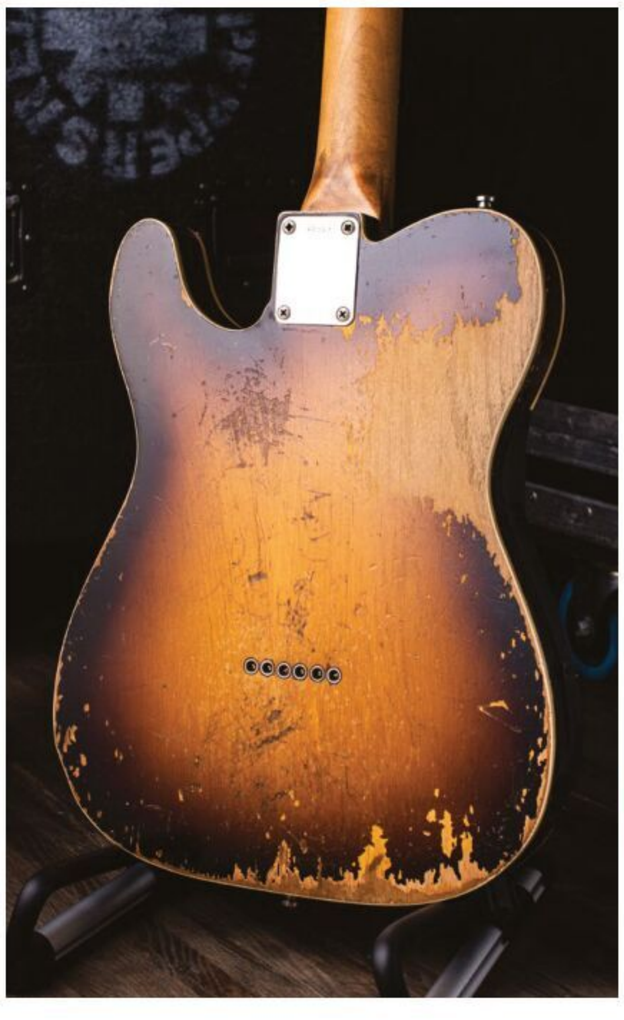
1960s Fender Telecaster Custom

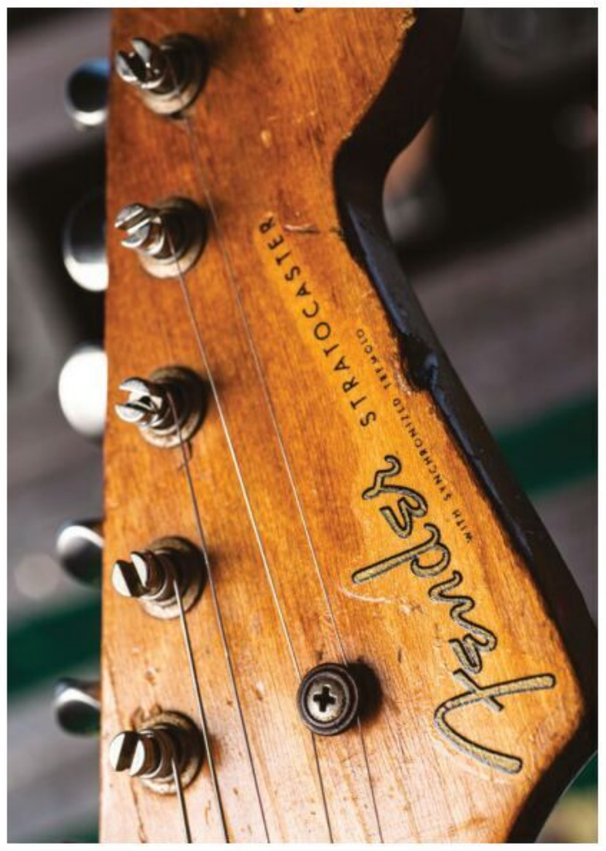
LEE This was one we got from Norman's Rare Guitars [*in Tarzana, California*]. John just decided he wanted a Tele – I believe this was around the time of *By the Way* – and I went to Norm and I said, "Hey, John wants a Tele." And Norm said, "What do you think of this one?" I brought it to John and he loved it. I normally don't really like the sound of Teles that much, but that one just sounded so good. It had a lot of bite to it.

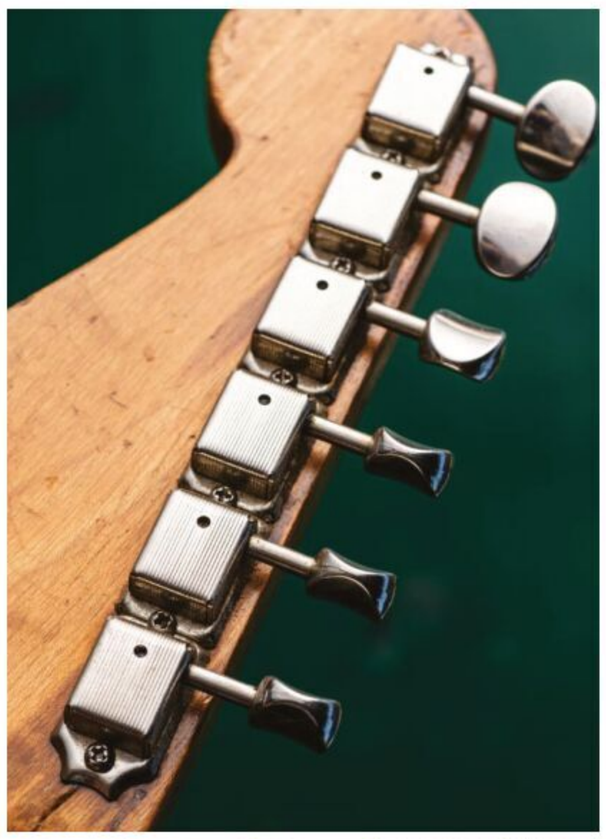
TREJO I'm pretty sure the guitar is stock. John will use this guitar two or three times a night in the show. It's always the guitar he uses at the beginning of the set, which will be either "Can't Stop" or "Around the World" [*both from* Californication]. He also uses it for "The Zephyr Song" [*from* By the Way] and "Tell Me Baby" [*from* Stadium Arcadium].

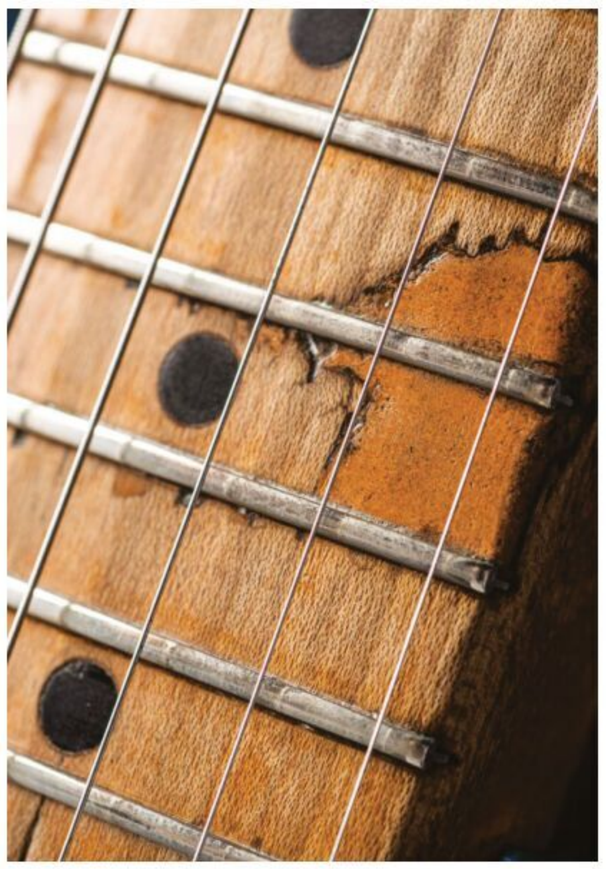












1955 Fender Stratocaster

LEE This was the first guitar John had that I know of when he came back to the band. He was like, "Here's the guitar, here's a Marshall head and a cabinet." We had to build his setup from there. And it started with the '55 Strat.

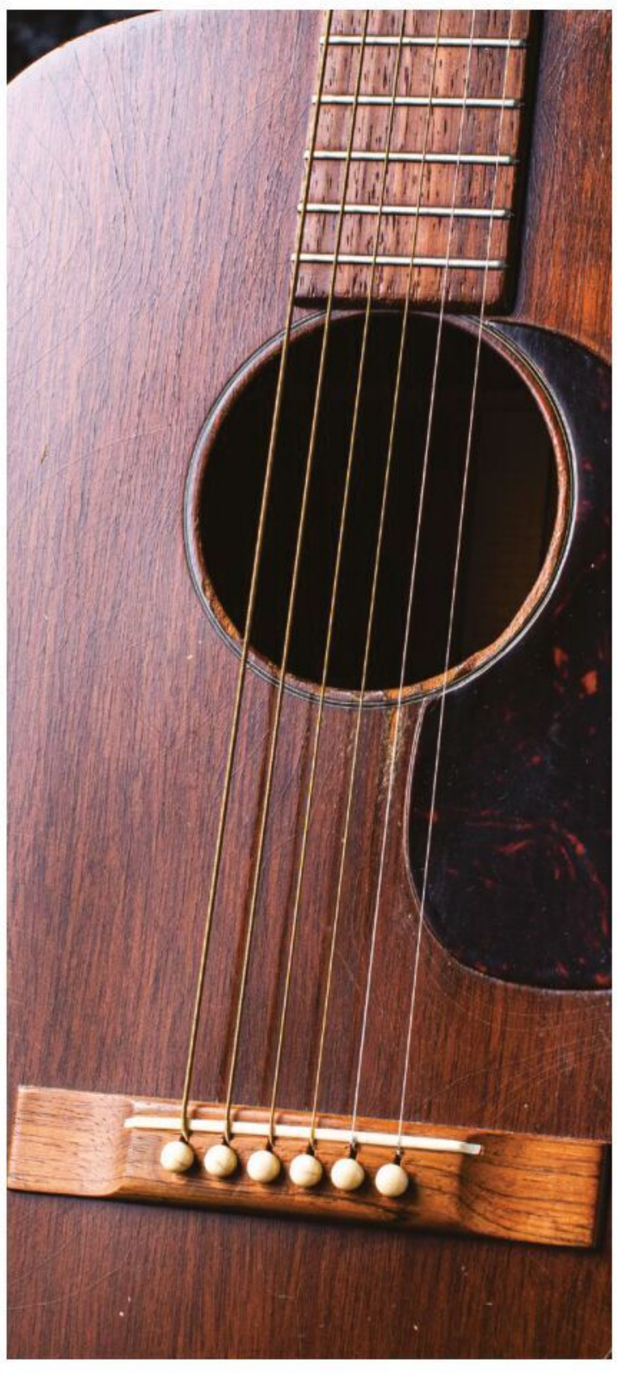
TREJO It's a more mellow-sounding guitar, and so he uses it for songs in the set that don't require searing leads, like "Don't Forget Me" [*from* By the Way] and also new songs like "Aquatic Mouth Dance," "One Way Traffic," and, oddly, "These Are the Ways" [*all from* Unlimited Love] which is heavier and in drop D. The '55 is probably there for two or three songs a night. And it's got a big chunk of fretboard that it looks like went missing, and then was replaced at some point.

LEE That was Anthony [*Kiedis*]'s fault. It was sitting in the lounge at Cello Studios [*now EastWest Studios in L.A.*], and he accidentally knocked it over!

1958 Gretsch White Falcon

TREJO John used to have a '55 White Falcon, and that guitar, I believe, was on loan to him from [*the actor and musician*] Vincent Gallo. Dave actually found the '58 that he's using now. In the current set he uses this guitar on two songs: "Otherside" and "Californication" [*both from* Californication].

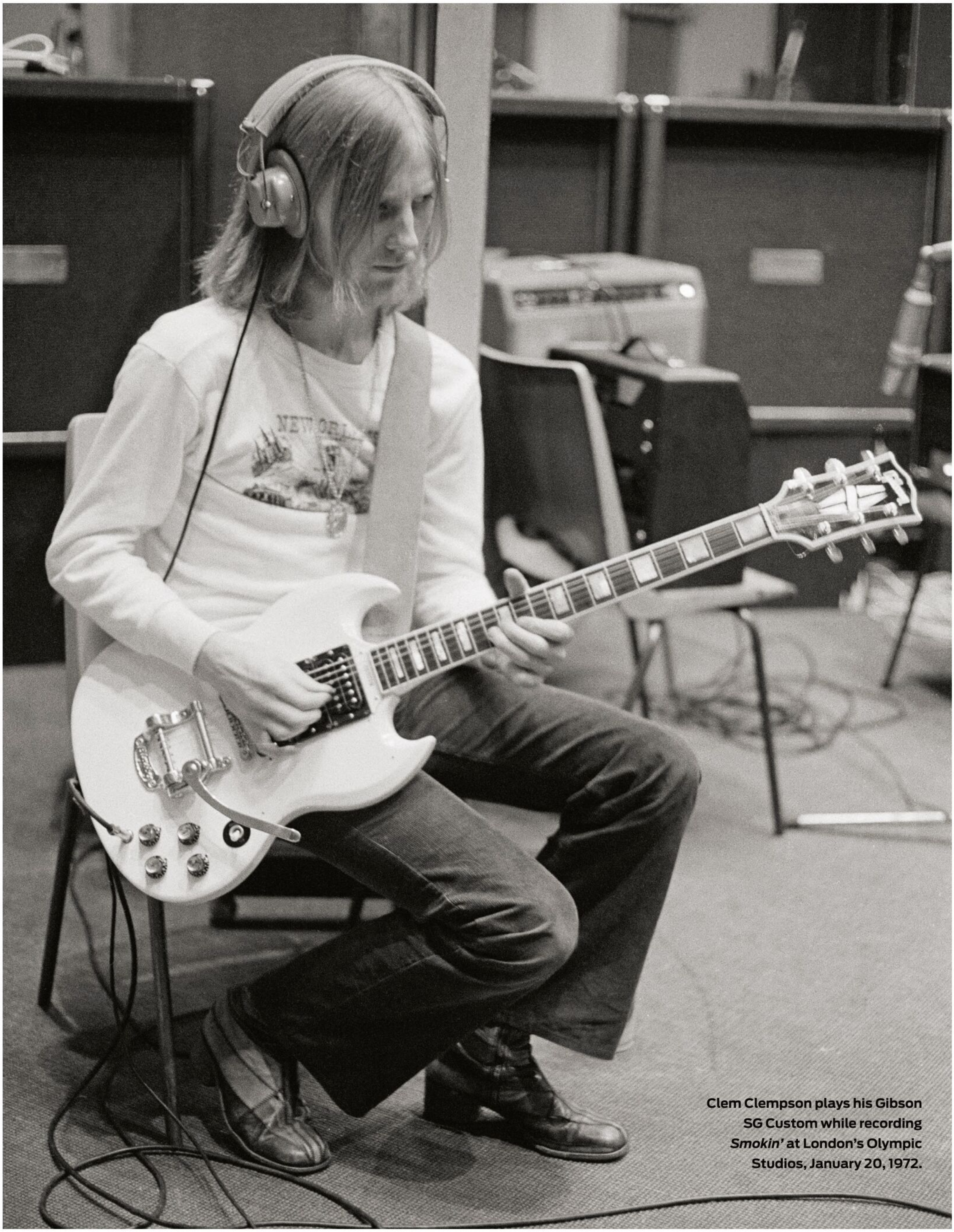
LEE I got this guitar at a truck stop during the *By the Way* period. No kidding. I had to meet a guy there because he was driving it down and it was a halfway point. I remember getting the cash and going to a Flying Jay truck stop in Gorman, California, and I felt so weird standing there with tens of thousands of dollars. The guy showed up, and he wanted 20 grand for it. And then I saw the guitar and I said, "Look, it's had some refinishing work done." And he goes, "Oh, let me make a call." He comes back and says, "Okay, we'll take seven." Like, that's quite a drop!



1940s Martin 00-15

LEE John has two of these. He got one from Rick Rubin, I think during *Californication*, and it sounded so great that John said, "Yeah, let's get another one." Like the Tele Custom, this one came from Norman's Rare Guitars. Norm usually gets people coming in looking for big dreadnoughts, but I said, "No, we want this." We had a Trance Audio Amulet pickup system installed in it.

TREJO The two Martins are basically interchangeable. During the recording of the two new albums, we had one in the live room and one in the room where John was staying so he could practice and write on it. Then he would come into the studio and grab the other one and pluck away at it. We never used the pickup systems during the recording. We would just set up microphones and he would play acoustically. It's the guitar you hear on "Tangelo" [*from* Unlimited Love].



Clem Clempson plays his Gibson SG Custom while recording *Smokin'* at London's Olympic Studios, January 20, 1972.

MICHAEL PUTLAND/GETTY IMAGES

THE FIXER

After Peter Frampton abruptly quit Humble Pie, **Clem Clempson** reignited the group and helped light up one of the 1970s' hottest rock albums: *Smokin'*

BY JAMES VOLPE ROTONDI

AFTER SEVERAL WELL-RECEIVED U.S. tours, a striking self-titled A&M debut in 1970 and the critically acclaimed *Rock On* album in early 1971, British quartet Humble Pie were still largely an opening band in the U.S., with only a relatively modest following back in their native England in fall 1971. Still, expectations — and record company advances — were high.

But despite being among the first bands ever dubbed a "supergroup" by the British press — owing to a lineup that included both the great singer/guitarist Steve Marriott of the Small Faces and a young phenom guitarist named Peter Frampton from a band called the Herd — Humble Pie were commercial underachievers.

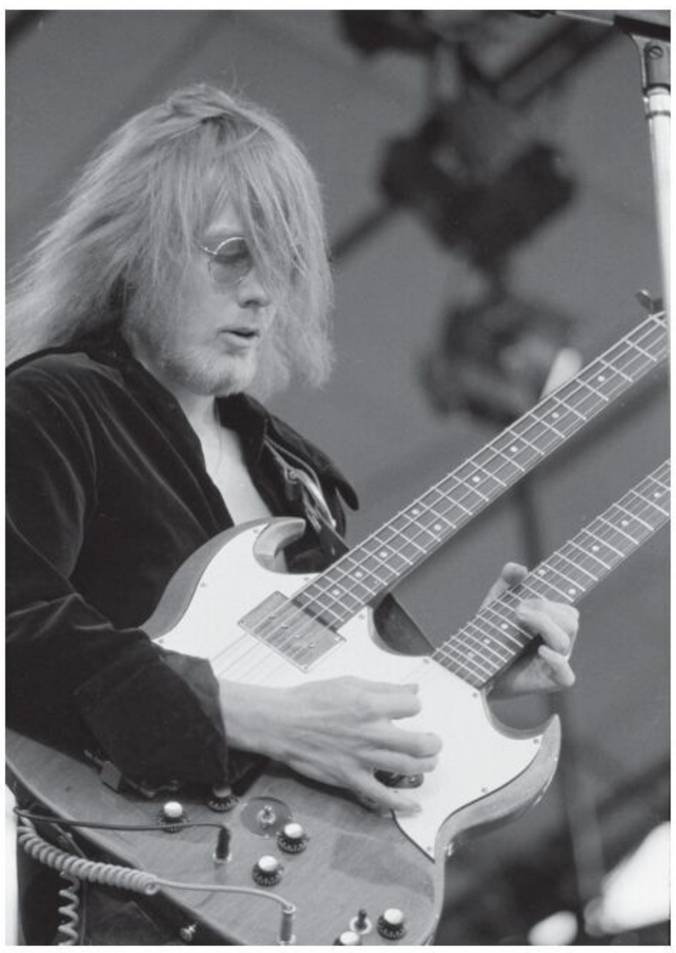
That all changed with a concert they recorded with engineer Eddie Kramer at the Fillmore East in New York City, opening for, of all people, soft-rocker Leo Sayer.

The resulting album, 1971's *Performance: Rockin' the Fillmore* — with its titanic highlights, including the proto-punk of "I Don't Need No Doctor" and the OG stoner anthem "Stone Cold Fever" — catapulted Humble Pie into what the band's friend David Gilmour once described as "the superleagues." Lengthy cuts like "Four-Day Creep" and a cover of Ray Charles' "Hallelujah I Love Her So" featured Frampton's flights of futuristic modal-blues soloing, Marriott's braying, stratospheric voice, and the R&B-informed rock rhythm section of drummer Jerry Shirley and

TOP: Clempson performs with Colosseum in June 1971. BOTTOM: Steve Marriott thrills the crowd in 1972.

ex–Spooky Tooth bassist Greg Ridley. *Performance: Rockin' the Fillmore* was quickly certified Gold and acted as an instant coronation. Then came the beheading.

Before *Performance* was even released, Frampton quit the band to pursue a solo career. Meanwhile, guitarist David "Clem" Clempson, who already had an enviable career under his belt with the brash, youthful British blues-rock band Bakerloo, was having doubts about his current band, British jazz-rock juggernaut Colosseum, an artful and innovative quintet that featured notable names like singer Chris Farlowe, drummer Jon Hiseman, bassist Mark Clarke and a gifted saxophone player (soon to be a prog legend) with the rather Dickensian name of Dick Heckstall-Smith. Receiving a call from Steve Marriott to "come down to Olympic Studios and audition for the band," Clempson arrived only to find himself at a full-on press conference to announce that he would be joining Humble Pie as their new lead guitarist.



"It was rather sudden, but very welcome," Clempson, now 73, says with a laugh. Although he would later continue to work with Colosseum, as well as with Jack Bruce, B.B. King, Jeff Beck, Andrew Lloyd-Webber and others, "the last few months of Colosseum had been somewhat frustrating and sort of restrictive for me," he says. "We would work for literally days on just a vocal harmony part, or a particular unison line. It got to a point where I really couldn't take it anymore. So when I got the call from Steve Marriott to audition for Humble Pie, I was quite eager. That was the most refreshing thing about Humble Pie, that it was all so much more immediate. I was set free in a way. I could finally just wail. And that's all I wanted to do!"

Clempson's approach to the guitar had an immediate and significant effect on Humble Pie's music. "We didn't see Peter quitting the band coming at all," Jerry Shirley recalls. "But after Peter left, Humble Pie made a conscious decision to sort of rein in the longer solos, partly because that was very much Peter's signature. So mostly the live solos became much more compact." The main difference between Frampton's and Clempson's styles, Shirley says, is that "Peter leaned a bit toward chromaticism, because of his jazz background, and Clem leaned more toward the blues vocabulary. But they're very similar in that they're both such devoted players. The guitar is everything to both of them."

"Peter obviously loved Wes Montgomery and Kenny Burrell, and players like that," Clempson notes, "but still, I always figured he learned like I did, like we all did back then: by copying the things that he liked and absorbing those into his own choices. I think Peter just finds nice notes to play over any given chord that he's playing over, though his note choices are slightly different from the sorts of things that I like to do. I never actually learned the major or minor pentatonic scale on guitar. This is partly due to the fact that I'd already had a whole education in classical piano. So when I took up the guitar, I knew all my scales and chords on the piano, and I just sort of discovered where those same notes and chords were on the fretboard, but without ever even looking at a scale diagram or anything like that. I learned the chord shapes, of course, but it was years before I ever practiced a scale or an arpeggio."

Jumping straight into Olympic Studios' Studio One, the revitalized quartet quickly knocked out *Fillmore*'s funky and fantastic follow-up — and eventually the band's biggest-selling album: 1972's *Smokin'*, which, 50 years on, forms the thematic centerpiece of the just-released, freshly remastered, and royally rocking nine-CD collection *Humble Pie: The A&M 1970–1975 Limited Edition Boxset*. The long-player was recorded and mixed by lauded producer Alan O'Duffy, who'd just stunned the world of both rock and musical theater with his pioneering work on the *Jesus Christ Superstar* cast album. "Humble Pie was so competent and powerful at that time," recalls O'Duffy, who enjoyed the able engineering assistance of the late Keith Harwood, of Led Zeppelin, Bowie and Rolling Stones fame. "There was never more than one or two takes of anything. There was never that thing of, 'I want to replace my guitar part,' or 'I didn't like the hi-hat feel on that. Can I replace the hi-hat?' It was just knock it out, no bullshit, end of story."

MICHAEL PUTLAND/GETTY IMAGES (CLEMPSON); FIN COSTELLO/REDFERNS/GETY IMAGES (MARRIOTT)

(from left) Marriott, Greg Ridley, Jerry Shirley and Clempson perform in 1974.

DAVID WARNER ELLIS/REDFERNS/GETTY IMAGES

From the first session, the band's fresh alchemy completely clicked. Performed with a white, three-pickup Gibson SG Custom and his favorite 1958 Gibson Les Paul goldtop, Clempson's wicked wah-wah tones and adroitly musical, progressive blues filigrees and solos slotted in perfectly with multitasker Marriott's dynamic Hammond organ chords, rocking Epiphone Dwight and Coronet rhythms, and sky-searing vocal bursts. With the more stripped-down Ridley/Shirley rhythm axis heating up the grooves, tracks like "Hot & Nasty," "The Fixer" and the perennial "30 Days in the Hole" still positively smoke with a pungent whiff of the fiery, fun, funky fumes emanating from Olympic's storied tracking room.

"The great thing for me, as well, is that no one ever suggested anything about what I should play," Clempson remembers. "When I came into the band, they were already rehearsing quite a bit of the new material — all the things that would end up on *Smokin'*, like 'The Fixer,' '30 Days in the Hole,' 'Sweet Peace and Time,' 'C'mon Everybody' — all these great riffs and ideas, with an eye to getting into the studio as soon as possible to record them. So all I really had to do was to find parts that would fit well over what they were already doing. Sometimes I'd play the main riff in unison with Steve; other times I'd play a harmony part, or take a lead.

"When it came time to tour and approach the material they had already done — the fan favorites like 'I Don't Need No Doctor' and 'Four-Day Creep,' — I approached them in the same way: try to understand what Steve was doing with the riffs and lines, and decide what I'd like to do over it. Now, I had, of course, heard the *Rockin' the Fillmore* album, and I knew there were certain things I should definitely nail as is — Peter's harmony line over the opening riff to 'Four-Day Creep,' for instance. I had to do that verbatim, of course. In fact, there were plenty of Pete's great lines and parts that I wanted to cop. But when it came to the soloing and improvised parts, I just wanted to do it my way, which felt more honest."

As O'Duffy recalls, the band set up in Olympic's Studio One main room very close together, with only four-foot-high baffles to separate their equipment. "Basically, Jerry's drums were in the middle of the floor, and then Greg Ridley's bass amps would be to the right and nearest to the drums. There'd be Clem on the right, and Steve on the left. The guys would all have headphones on, and Steve would maybe have a mic if he wanted to do some scratch vocals. And while we did use baffles, we didn't get too hung up about a bit of bleed. A bit of Clem's guitar in the drum mics? Big deal." O'Duffy — who when mixing panned

"HUMBLE PIE WERE PLAYING WITH THEIR HEARTS. THEY WEREN'T PLAYING 'LET'S PRETEND WE'RE A ROCK BAND' OR 'LET'S PRETEND WE'RE A SOUL BAND.' THEY WERE THE GENUINE ARTICLE"
—ALAN O'DUFFY

ABOVE: Humble Pie at work on *Smokin'*. OPPOSITE: (left) Onstage in 1972; Clempson in 1974; in the studio for *Smokin'*.

Clempson's Marshall JMP Super Lead 100 to the right and Marriott's Marshall JMP Super PA 100-watt amps to the left — recalls using Neumann KM56 and AKG C451 mics on Clempson's Marshall cabs, with an attenuation of about -20dB, as the amps were run "quite hot."

"None of those solos were more than two takes," Clempson says. "I especially remember the recording of 'Hot & Nasty.' That was just such a special evening. We started with this jam, just having fun, but it had a great groove. We played it through, and then Steve knocked out a few lyrics and put a vocal on it. Done. But then Stephen Stills suddenly appeared from nowhere and came up with this great backing vocal line to put over it: 'Do you get the message?' He said, 'Do you mind if I put it on the track?' So off he went to the live room and put that down, and it was amazing.

"This is what being in the studio is supposed to be like, really," Clempson continues. "And it led to one of the best recordings I've ever been a part of. That's as good an example of the camaraderie in the band as anything I can think of. We were very close then, having a lot of fun, really giving it one, and I think that really comes through on the record. We weren't trying to conquer the world or anything. It was just about the joy of doing it.

"Look, it's a well-known story how things started to go downhill after a while, but for those first 18 months or so that I was in the band, we loved being together, and there was such a great feeling among us all. I suppose that's the most heartbreaking thing about what happened later: knowing what we'd lost."

While both Clempson''s and Marriott's interlocking leads are utterly wicked throughout, the jagged, righteous rhythms on album tracks like "Road Runner's 'G' Jam" and "Sweet Peace and Time" equally run the show — big, fat Marshall tones that burst with mojo. "My rhythm playing improved quite a lot by joining Humble Pie and working with Steve," Clempson maintains. "He was an absolutely fantastic rhythm player. Even apart from his big power chords, which were magnificent, even playing a Strat through a clean amp, he would find so many lovely little licks. One Humble Pie song I enjoy listening back to is 'Black Coffee' [*from 1973's* Eat It, *the follow-up to* Smokin']. I'm playing that sort of boogie figure on the bottom two strings, and the slide guitar as well, but Steve came up with these little clean soul music licks over that on the top three strings that are just so tasteful and have so much personality."

Marriott, as Jerry Shirley explains, continued to be an ardent student of the guitar throughout his life,

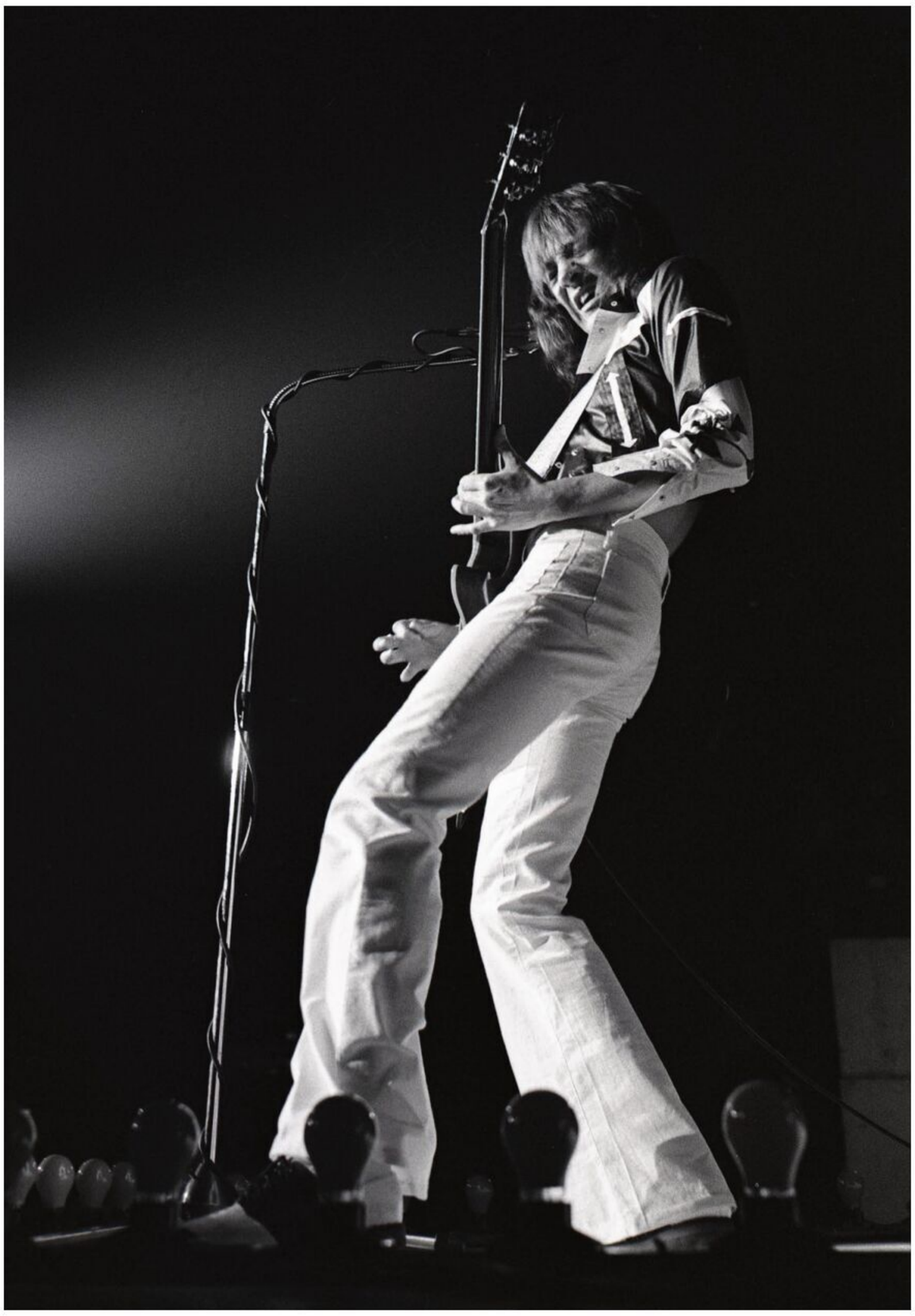
> "HUMBLE PIE WAS SO MUCH MORE IMMEDIATE. I WAS SET FREE IN A WAY. I COULD FINALLY JUST WAIL. AND THAT'S ALL I WANTED TO DO!"
> —CLEM CLEMPSON

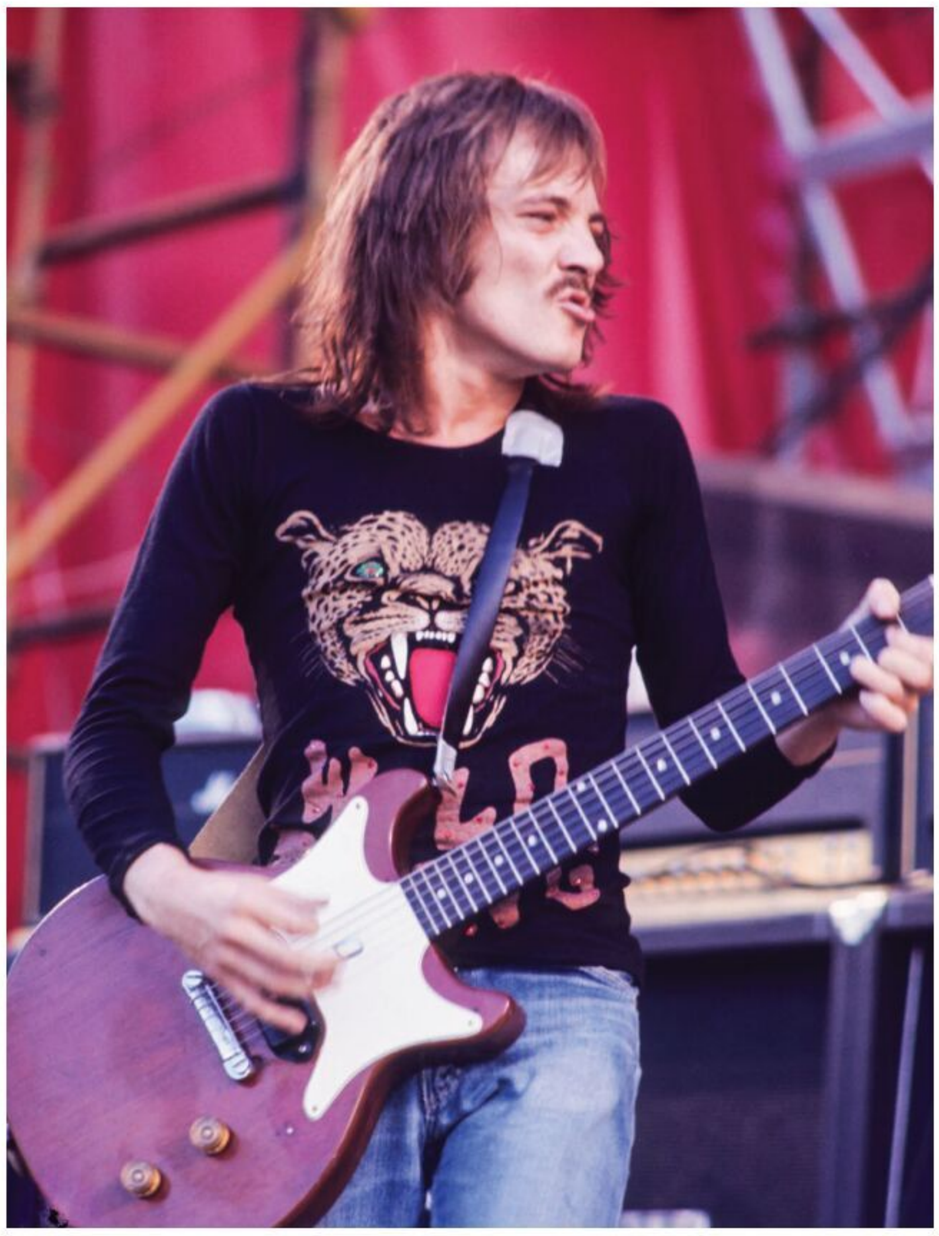
MICHAEL PUTLAND/GETTY IMAGES

which was cut short in 1991 in a tragic house fire. (Listen to his stunning 1983 version of "Five Long Years" on YouTube for a taste of his Chicago Blues prowess.) "There was this fascinating guy out of Chicago," Shirley explains, "an amazing artist and a guitar player named Bob Novak. They called him Bumble Bee Bob. [*Novak died in 2015 at the age of 83.*] Bob had learned blues guitar and harmonica straight from a lot of the great bluesmen in Chicago — Otis Rush, Albert King, Muddy Waters… guys like that. He knew exactly how they played all those licks. He was a friend of the band from the very early days, and he used to come over to England and stay with Steve for weeks at a time, and the two of them would sit down with their guitars and Bob would show Steve exactly how those guys fretted and nuanced all those licks. Steve was in awe of Bob, and as Steve already had great vibrato and was a great player to begin with, it took his playing to a whole new level. And this was eight years after Humble Pie."

Marriott's influence on Clempson didn't stop with blues-and-rhythm licks. "Steve turned me on to so much music that I never knew existed, like the Staples Singers," Clempson says. "Ever since I met him, Mavis Staples has been my all-time favorite female singer. And when he turned me on to [*acoustic giant*] Leo Kottke, I thought, How can one person possibly be doing all that? Because of him, I had to buy a

MICHAEL PUTLAND/GETTY IMAGES (BAND LIVE); DICK BARNATT/REDFERNS (CLEMPSON); (STUDIO_)





Marriott performs in 1972 with his Les Paul Standard (left) and Epiphone Coronet (right).

Martin and begin learning how to fingerpick properly." Likewise, it was when Marriott asked Clempson to play slide on *Smokin'* that bottleneck became an integral part of his palette. "All these things are what allowed me to have a really successful career in the session world when I decided I didn't want to be on the road quite so much anymore," Clempson insists. "I had built quite an extensive vocabulary by then, and a lot of that came from joining Humble Pie."

In fact, if there's any advice Clempson says he would offer to young players who want to improve their vocabularies and up their game, it's that same open-minded approach. "Explore more styles of music than just the one you mostly gravitate to, and do more than just play solos," he stresses. "Early on, I missed out on a lot of great rhythm playing that I didn't ever think to listen to carefully. I only wanted to listen to B.B. King, Buddy Guy, Jeff Beck and Peter Green. I wanted to hear the great soloists, and that's what I wanted to do myself. Sure, I was aware of people like [*Howlin' Wolf's*] Hubert Sumlin, but I never really took close notice of exactly what he was doing. If I listened to a Buddy Guy record, I'd really only focus on the lead guitar and not on the rest of the instruments, especially the rhythm players. Go listen to all those fantastic Tamla/Motown rhythm guitarists, for example. How the hell did I not notice how great that was?"

> "PETER LEANED A BIT TOWARD CHROMATICISM, AND CLEM LEANED MORE TOWARDS THE BLUES VOCABULARY. BUT THE GUITAR IS EVERYTHING TO BOTH OF THEM."
> —JERRY SHIRLEY

Listening back to *Smokin'* after 50 years, engineer/mixer O'Duffy knows exactly how great Humble Pie were, and he's not afraid to put a bow on it. "The Humble Pie guys were the genuine article," he says. "Humble Pie were playing with their hearts. They weren't playing 'Let's pretend we're a rock band' or 'Let's pretend we're a soul band.' There are other bands that I can name who would've been equally clever playing a bossa nova or a samba or a pop record. Humble Pie were playing the thing itself, not a version of that thing. I feel privileged to have lived at a time when these people were on earth and were in our circle, and we had the pleasure of working together and making something truly beautiful. I'm still proud. It's 50 years ago, and I'm a proud man listening back to 'The Fixer' and 'Hot N' Nasty' and 'Sweet Peace and Time.' It all still sounds spectacular."

James Volpe Rotondi, a recent member of Jerry Shirley's new incarnation of Humble Pie, thanks Jerry Shirley, David "Clem" Clempson, Peter Frampton, Dave "Bucket" Colwell, Steve Karas and Alan O'Duffy for their participation and insights for this piece. More info at humblepieofficial.com.

ROBERT KNIGHT ARCHIVE/REDFERNS/GETTY IMAGES (LEFT); MARK/UNIVERSAL IMAGES GROUP/GETTY IMAGES (RIGHT)

"The greatest acoustic guitar gadget since the capo. Endless joy!"

MIKE DAWES

Fingerstyle master

ACOUSTIC EFFECTS NO AMP REQUIRED

- 8 effects: reverb, delay, tremolo, and more
- Easy installation—no tools!
- Magnetically attached
- Use it at home, around the campfire, on stage, or in the studio—take it anywhere!

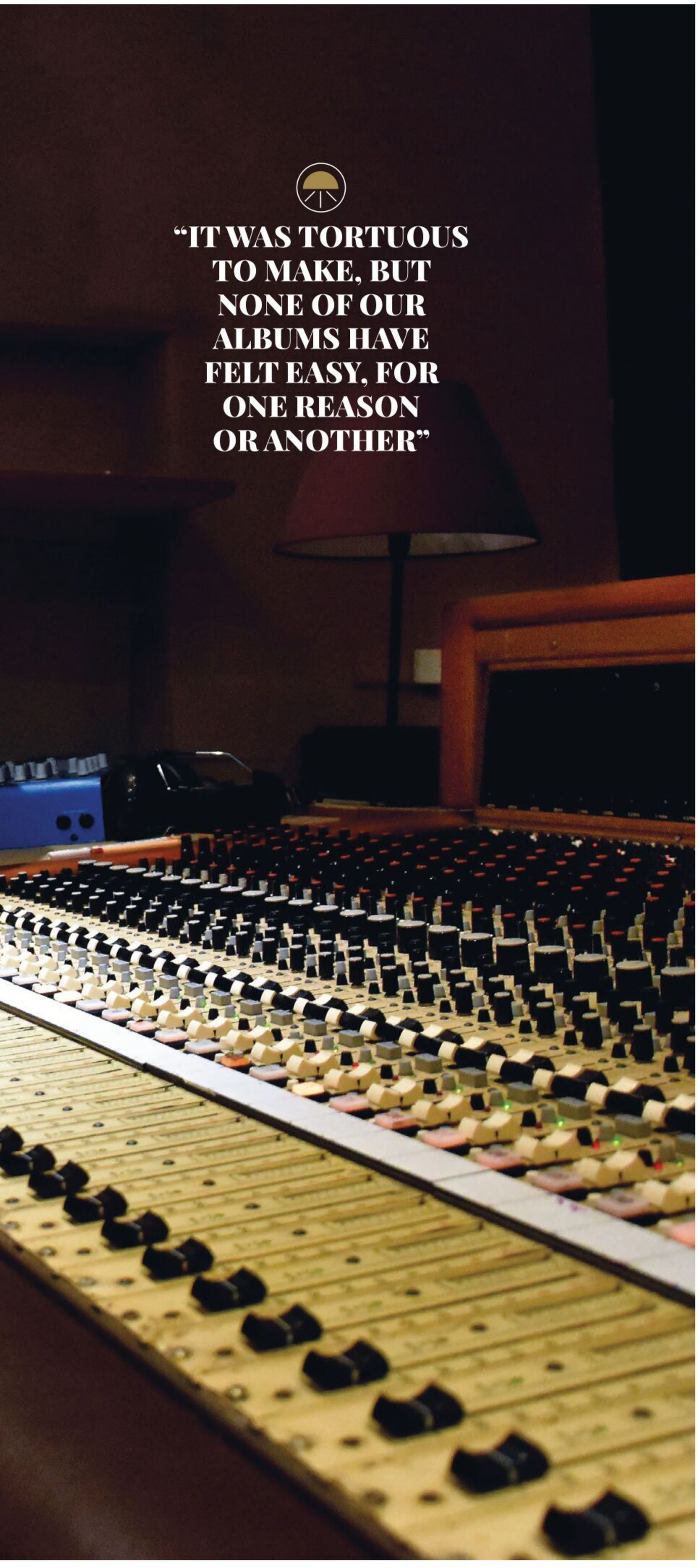
TONEWOODAMP

WWW.TONEWEOODAMP.COM

HEAR A DEMO NOW!

HOLIDAY SALE!

BATTERIES
dbx 160
dbx 160



BILLY DUFFY • THE CULT •

FULL CIRCLE

After a six-year absence, **the Cult** are back with *Under the Midnight Sun*, an album that finds them returning to the sound of their first two albums. Says **Billy Duffy**, "We're looking backward, and it feels good."

BY MARK McSTEA

PHOTOGRAPHY BY MICK PEEK

IT WAS 1984 when Billy Duffy defined his own idea of the indie guitar hero on the Cult's debut album, *Dreamtime*. Playing a Gretsch White Falcon through a Roland JC-120, with a judicious use of delay and chorus, Duffy created epic soundscapes. It was but a prelude to the group's next album, their 1985 commercial breakthrough, *Love*, where Duffy eschewed traditional blues-rock stylings for an approach that combined open drone strings and densely layered guitars. His sweeping aural pictures were the perfect backdrop for singer Ian Astbury's thoughtful lyrical approach.

The intervening years have seen the Cult adopt more of a hard rock approach, but for those who love the sound of those first two albums, there is good news. The Cult's latest record, *Under the Midnight Sun*, finds them returning to the approach that was their signature in those early years. "We definitely wanted to recapture some of that older stuff that had been left behind, and explore it to see if we could get back into that space," Duffy tells *Guitar Player*. "Way back then, when we were making our first records, all we wanted to do was sound like a rock band."

Admittedly, the Cult threw fans a left curve with 1987's *Electric*, on which they adopted a reductive, riff-based approach. Rick Rubin's bone-dry production only served to enhance the grinding, direct attack that the band adopted, with Duffy's classic Gretsch tone traded for the traditional Les Paul/Marshall combo on many tracks. The new sound was a hit with fans on both sides of the Atlantic, and the band's 1989 follow-up, *Sonic Temple*, nailed its colors firmly to the old-school rock and roll mast with its cover shot of Duffy about to crash out a power chord.

Unfortunately, by 1991, relations between Duffy and Astbury were strained, and the band's music was out of step with the emerging grunge movement. The Cult continued to tour and release records, but at ever-greater intervals. Duffy puts this down to a determination to record only when they feel that they have enough strong songs to warrant releasing an album. "We could churn out records more frequently, but I think it's hard enough to keep the standards up," he says. "We just wait until we feel we've got enough common ground to make a record."

The cover sleeve for *Under the Midnight Sun*.

If *Under the Midnight Sun* is any indication, Duffy and Astbury are in sync with one another once again. "There are probably certain areas between us that are minefields," the guitarist concedes, "but we avoid them on an unconscious level." Recorded with longtime drummer John Tempesta and new bassist Charlie Jones, *Under the Midnight Sun* is in many respects a reverie for the band's early days. The title is itself a reference to the group's performance at Finland's June 1986 Provinssirock festival, where Astbury witnessed the midnight sun, a phenomenon that takes place around the summer solstice, when the sun remains visible throughout the night in countries north of the Arctic Circle. "It's three in the morning, the sun's up, and there's all these beautiful people in this halcyon moment," Astbury recalled. "People are laying on the grass, making out, drinking, smoking. There were rows of flowers at the front of the stage from the performances earlier that evening. It was an incredible moment." The singer's remembrances came flooding back as lockdown lifted and the band teamed up with producer Tom Dalgety, to begin work on the new album. "When the world stopped, I had this moment to write in real time, to calculate," Astbury says. "I was compelled by this vision, this anomaly, this memory, of being under the midnight sun."

As the band prepared to hit the road, Duffy sat down with *Guitar Player* to discuss the Cult's attempt to recapture the magic of its past.

***Under the Midnight Sun* sounds very much like a throwback to the band's early sound. Do you agree?**

We did create a lot of the old sounds but without trying to make a pastiche of our early songs. That's the irony, because that textured guitar thing was what we actually sounded like back then. It was a product of who we were and where we were at as musicians. We were embarking on a journey where we wanted to become an arena-rock band. We probably left fans behind who loved that early stuff with later albums that we made. I think *Dreamtime* was a very underrated record for us. It didn't get released in America, so many American fans might not have been aware of it.

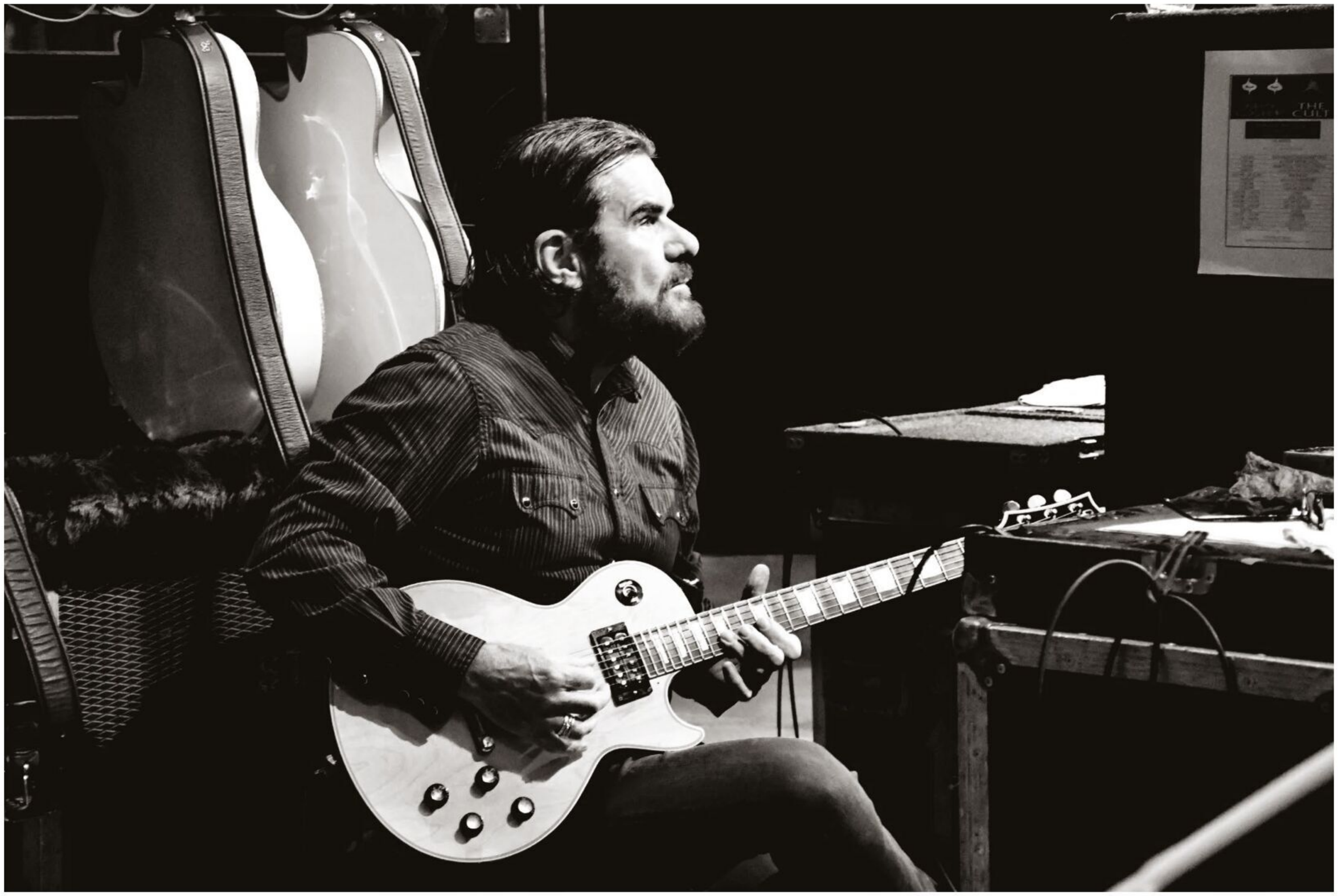
You've said in the past that it can sometimes feel like a bit of a struggle to make a Cult album. How was it this time?

It was a bit tortuous to make, but then none of our albums have felt easy, for one reason or another. We made it in a difficult period in the world's history. And I think it is a challenge when you have two writers like me and Ian to find that common ground between us musically, and then to find a producer who can make us both feel like we got what we wanted from the record. In that sense, I think we did well to get Tom Dalgety, who had a great CV and had the right kind of tenacity to see things through. [*Dalgety's credits include records for the Pixies, Opeth and the Damned.*] I don't have a lot of objectivity about an album until it's been out for a while. At this point it's all about bits and pieces that I remember from various tracks, rather than the overall piece of work.

There are a lot of layered and textured songs on the record, which is a move away from a lot of the riffier things you've done in the past, back toward the kind of approach that you featured a lot on your earlier albums. Was that a conscious choice?

Yes it was. There was an understanding that Ian and Dalgety wanted to make a different-sounding kind of record. I mean that in more of an emotional sense. If you're playing a kind of riffy rock, your singer has to be of a certain mindset. I think when you're older and trying to play "emotionally honest" rock music, then it's difficult when you're not really a young pirate anymore. [*laughs*] How authentic does it seem to be fronting that brash, riff-driven music? That isn't any kind of a knock on metal music. There's plenty of metal that I like. It's just a question of whether it works for us.

The album captures a mood, which is the primary thing that we always try to achieve on Cult records. I think a lot of the texturing comes from Ian. The three musicians laid down the music in the U.K.,



Duffy poses in the studio with his white Gibson Les Paul Custom.

and there was an organic footing there, but after that had been completed, there was a lot of chopping and changing to add the vocals in, and then there were a lot of keyboard textures that were added as well. That isn't really my domain, although I was fine with what got added to the songs at that later stage.

Did recording during the global shutdown have an impact on the process?

Definitely. I think our last two albums, *Hidden City* and *Choice of Weapon*, were very much more North American records, both as a result of where they were recorded and the producers that we worked with. I'd been pushing for us to record in the U.K. for years, and then, as a consequence of the pandemic, that was what happened. I just wanted to change the oxygen and see what that brought in, and for me that was really helpful to achieve the goal that I had in mind, which was to focus more on the indie side of my guitar playing. I think recording in the U.K. adds a different flavor to the finished product.

There are only eight tracks on the album, which keeps the running length in line with a lot of classic rock albums. That seems to be something that has become a lot more common again. There was certainly a period when albums were much longer, especially with the drive to fill CDs up with music.

Yes. We recorded 13 songs for the album, but Ian was very insistent that we keep it at the eight tracks. I believe that extra tracks and bonus tracks can be useful, but recording tracks for an album just to make it long? I don't think that audiences necessarily have the attention span to listen to a long album these days anyway. The CD definitely has a lot to answer for on that front. Quality over quantity is always the most important factor.

In terms of gear choices for the album, was there anything different from recent records? Any unusual choices of guitar or amp?

This is the bit where I have to disappoint guitar magazine readers. [*laughs*] There was no magical, mythical stuff. It was just the same canon of equipment that I always go to. A decision was clearly made to make this record a blues-rock–free zone though. It was a decision made at a creative level. When I'd come up with an idea or a riff, I'd get together with Dalgety and I'd start to realize what he was looking for. Basically, at that point, I just took the stuff that wasn't fitting and did a side project with Mike Peters from the Alarm under the banner of Coloursound. We recorded it over a weekend in a cottage in Wales. That was where I used a lot of my riff-based ideas in a traditional blues-rock vein. For this record I used the Gretsch a lot, plus a Les Paul

"WHEN WE WERE MAKING OUR FIRST RECORDS, ALL WE WANTED TO DO WAS SOUND LIKE A ROCK BAND"

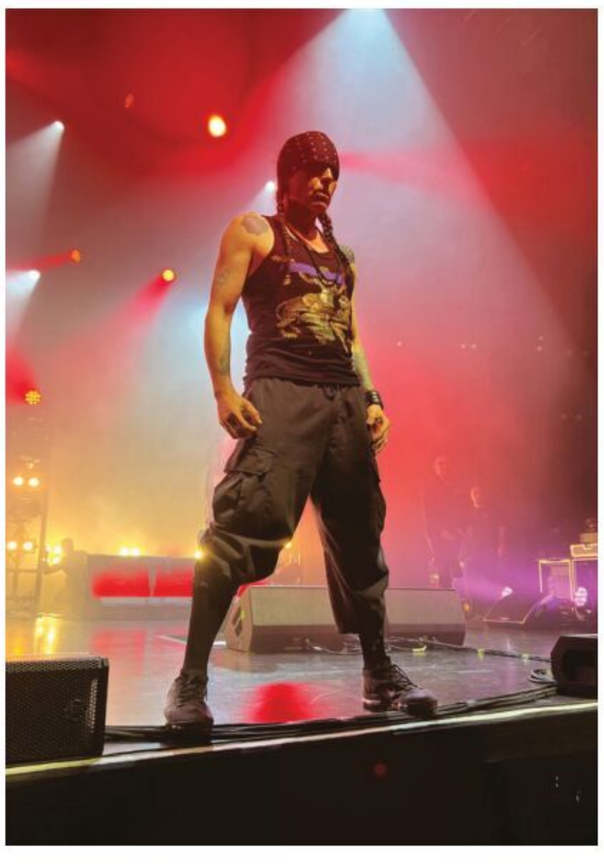
and a Les Paul Junior. Effects were just the basic overdrive, chorus and delays.

On the new song, "Give Me Mercy," you play a few things outside your normal style.
The parts on that were written really quickly, yet ironically it was the last one that Ian sang on. I always knew that the music was strong, but everything depended on what Ian came up with. It turned out so well that it became the first single from the album. I wanted to avoid the guitar parts sounding too '80s — that smooth, air-brushed lead sound. It needed something different that was still in a rock vein, and I actually came up with the idea of trying to approach the music in the way that Mike Campbell would do. He had a great way of working tasteful fills and parts around Tom Petty's vocals. He's a fantastically underrated player.

"A DECISION WAS CLEARLY MADE TO MAKE THIS RECORD A BLUES-ROCK FREE ZONE"

"Mirror" was interesting with the amount of delay on the guitars and the amount of space in the track. At times there was almost an element of classic Bond music about it.
That's a track where Ian really responded quickly to the idea that I presented to him. There was a lot of tweaking and revision in the end though. Once I'd laid down the backing track and Ian had started to chip away with his vocals, things started to change. Dalgety, who can play guitar, bass and functional keyboards, would put things on the track when he was trying to inspire a great vocal performance, and then we'd have to reassess the track and what we should perhaps change at that point. I didn't slavishly stick to my original parts; I was always open to adapting to the ongoing development of the song. On this one, originally, there was a danger of sounding too clichéd in that Ennio Morricone style. There was way too much whammy at first, but then I thought, No, it's not the Shadows. [*laughs*] We'll be playing "Mirror" live and I'm really struggling with how I'm going to cover all the parts.

Ian Astbury performs with the Cult.



"A Cut Inside" has an epic feel with the huge solo on there.
I always used to joke with Dalgety about how there was so little space for extended solos on this record, that there was too much "movie theme" guitar playing. [*laughs*] It's hard to find the right emotive space for a solo sometimes, to express something that serves the song. Unless you just want to do "faux rock" all over a song, it can take some thinking and head-scratching to come up with an approach. I think we definitely achieved it on this one.

The acoustic track, "Knife Through Butterfly Heart," is quite a departure from the rest of the album.
I was a big supporter of that song from the start. It was very much an Ian song that's been kicking around for about a decade. He's had that basic idea for ages. We tried to do it for several albums in the past, but we just really dug in this time to get a version that he was happy with. I've always pushed for us to do this one.

There are some familiar sounds on "Vendetta X."
I guess it's clearly a Billy Duffy guitar riff, if I dare speak of myself in the third person! [*laughs*] This one features the White Falcon through a Roland JC-120 with a bit of delay, and I'm also running through a Marshall. I suppose it is the classic sound that people associate with me. The actual body of the song is actually Ian's. This is one of my personal favorites on the record, but then I'm just an old-fashioned bloke, so whenever I hear A minor to F, I'm already half sold on a song. [*laughs*]

The Cult have been successful for so long. Do you ever think about the band's longevity?
I think it's interesting that we've always been on indie labels, so we've not had that global label support that the likes of Sony or Geffen could offer. We spent many years on Beggars Banquet and probably kept that label afloat for a few years as well. I think that lots of my friends have all kinds of awards and trinkets for their work, and the Cult have never had anything. I'm sure that's got a lot to do with the clout that a major corporation has when it comes down to influence and leaning on the right people. Not that it really matters, but I think a lot of things like that come down to who your manager has lunch with.

In the end though, it's always about the work. The funny thing is that I know a lot of our earliest fans will really respond to the new album, yet back at the start all we wanted to be was a rock band and hopefully to be big enough to play arenas. Now we are a big rock band and we've had that kind of success that we always dreamed of having. So we're looking backward, and it feels good. As long as what you do feels authentic, that's all that matters. You have to go with your gut. We've never done anything that hasn't been totally authentic, and that's a pretty good thing to be able to say 40 years down the line.

LAURA RITZKO

Gibson
Marshall

"BONNIE RAITT'S SLIDE PLAYING WAS A REVELATION ABOUT ALL THE THINGS I NEEDED TO WORK ON AND LEARN"

Until Everybody Knows Who You Are

Rory Block gives blues women their due on *Ain't Nobody Worried,* with acoustic covers of Bonnie Raitt, Tracy Chapman, Elizabeth Cotten and many others.

BY JIMMY LESLIE

PHOTOGRAPHY BY SERGIO KURHAJEC

RORY BLOCK REMAINS one of the premier purveyors of acoustic blues. In addition to honors received over her lengthy career, she won the Blues Foundation's prestigious Koko Taylor Award for Traditional Female Blues Artist in 2021 as well as the 2019 Blues Music Award for Acoustic Artist of the Year. Taylor herself called her "Little Miss Dynamite." Block loves to commemorate her heroes and predecessors, and to celebrate female empowerment. She's recorded a host of tribute albums that pay homage to everyone from Robert Johnson to Bukka White to Bessie Smith. On *Ain't Nobody Worried* (Stony Plain), the third volume in her "Power Women of the Blues," she takes a slightly different spin by honoring a variety of artists, rather than focusing on one in particular.

With her slide prowess, powerful voice and pension for making a cover sound like her own song, Block is like an acoustic Bonnie Raitt. One of the standout tracks on *Ain't Nobody Worried* is "Love Has No Pride," made famous by Raitt, who Block calls "the best singer on Earth." Block's take on Elizabeth Cotten's iconic "Freight Train" is another guitar-centric gem, and her driving version of Tracy Chapman's "Fast Car" is a cool inclusion because of how well the 1988 hit flows seamlessly alongside older material, such as Gladys Knight's "Midnight Train to Georgia." Most of the song selections are drawn from the '50s, '60s and '70s, which is still relatively recent compared to the folk blues and old-timey music Block generally interprets. The sole original cut here is a stripped-down and refreshing version of her most popular song, "Lovin' Whiskey." Block's rock-solid rhythm playing anchors the entire affair, and all of the guitar overdubs are her own. The same is true of the vocals, some of which one would swear were done by a group of singers. Block even plays bass and percussion here. Girl power, indeed!

Why are you so dedicated to playing purely acoustic blues?

The blues was invented on acoustic instruments, so the only way I really hear early American country blues is on an acoustic guitar. You can do whatever you want, but in my opinion the acoustic guitar is the most perfectly suited instrument for the music.

Is your signature Martin OM-40 from 2004 still your main instrument?

It's my only instrument. I'm a Martin guitar freak. I've seen a lot of wonderful instruments, but in my view Martin has a mystical edge above everything else on the planet — the universe! They are magnificent instruments, unmatched in their historical significance. Before I owned a Martin guitar, they invited me to pick one off the wall at a NAMM Show. Of course I was floored! I chose an OM-28V [*Vintage*] because it was the

Rory Block performs at Theater De Lampegiet, Veenendaal, Netherlands, April 17, 2012.

right size and feel. Later I was honored with my own signature model. Dick Boak and I sat down in a restaurant and sketched out the design ideas on dinner napkins. We made the neck a black-top highway, because I thought the road was an iconic bluesy theme. We added road signs and a railroad crossing in mother of pearl in honor of "Cross Road Blues." I stayed with the OM body style because its medium size is pretty much perfect for everyone. Dick designed the bracing to be sturdier, because of the way that I pound on the guitar, along with a more durable fret wire, since I do a lot of slamming and banging. I use a medium set of Martin Authentic Acoustic SP strings.

While I appreciate a 12-fret neck, I went with 14 frets because it allows more range when you use a capo at the second fret, which I almost always do. It has something to do with the keys I like to sing in. Standard tuning, dropped D, open D, and open G all work well for me capoed at the second fret. I do that for almost all the Robert Johnson songs in open G, including "Crossroads," as well as Son House songs in open D, such as "Preachin' Blues" or "Death Letter" in open G.

What capo do you prefer?

I endorse Shubb because it's the perfect capo for me. Everybody keeps trying to build a better mousetrap, but for me this one is simply the best. I love the way the Shubb snaps in place. Every capo is going to drive the tuning into another realm, because every guitar has idiosyncratic, unique frets. You have to expect that, even if it's so marginal that you can barely hear it. The capo changes all of those subtleties because it changes the starting point. I know what's going to happen with the Shubb. The bass string is going to go up a tiny bit, and I compensate for that immediately.

How did you wind up using a socket wrench for a slide?

John Hammond told me to try it, because back in the '60s I couldn't find anything that fit my smaller hand. He and John Fahey or Stefan Grossman would simply break a wine bottle neck and sand it down, but that was too large for me. No matter what bottle I used, it fell right off. People started to bring me custom slides made of everything from blown glass to porcelain, but nothing was quite right until John Hammond said, "Go out and get yourself a socket wrench. They come in all sizes." I happened to have a friend who owned a gas station, and he let me try on a bunch of socket wrenches. I wound up using a Snap-on Tools 15mm deep well socket, with the end sanded off. It has great percussive power. I recently tried a porcelain slide again that someone had given me years ago, and it sounded much more mellow, buttery sweet and smooth. The metal slide provides a nice edge, and the heavy weight makes it perfect for percussion when hitting the frets or the neck on songs such as Muddy Watters' "I Be Bound to Write You," which I do in open G without a capo, or Robert Johnson's "If I Had Possession Over Judgment Day" [*also in open G*].

Most modern slide stars play electric. What are your thoughts about sustaining slide notes on an acoustic?

I get all the sustain I need with an acoustic guitar and a slide. As long as you keep the vibrato going, there's no limit to the sustain other than the diminishing volume because of the law of thermodynamics [*i.e., the total energy of an isolated system is constant*].

Very interesting. Is it true that you didn't have much of a grasp on slide until Bonnie Raitt inspired you with a session performance?

I was already playing slide, but very badly. I was struggling, so for years I would play Robert Johnson's material without a slide. I was very nervous about it. I would overshoot or undershoot, and the note would be sharp or flat. I didn't have good tone, and the vibrato was too fast and buzzy. I couldn't figure out what I was doing wrong until later, when I first recorded "Ramblin' on My Mind" and Bonnie played a solo on it. When we were mixing, the engineers isolated her track and I heard how her playing was so cool and relaxed. I wrote about this in my book as well [*2011's* When a Woman Gets the Blues], so I'm quoting myself, but it sounded like she was taking a stroll up the neck on the strings. I noticed that her vibrato was a wonderful, funky rocking back and forth. It wasn't fast and nervous like what I was doing. Listening to her gave me a bunch of ideas to try, including that thing she does where she leaps up from a note with a quick slide right off the string.

As a guitar player it often happens that you reach a plateau where you think, I'm stuck playing the same old stuff. I need some new ideas. Listening to Bonnie's slide playing on that track was a profound jolt of inspiration. It was a revelation about all the things I needed to work on and learn, and it changed the way I practiced. After a while, I found the pocket. I always say, "Slide is a Zen thing." After that I started moving forward, learning to do the things that I now teach.

PAUL BERGEN/REDFERNS/GETTY IMAGES

CELEBRATING

ALLPARTS

1982 40th 2022

ANNIVERSARY

CELEBRATING
40 YEARS OF
PREMIUM TOOLS FOR TONE

SCAN ME

Such as?
For years, I felt completely unable to solo. My thing was sticking with the classic arrangements as closely as I could. But over time I realized that I would have to branch out and develop the ability to improvise. I've since discovered that if you think you can't do a solo, try singing it first. My husband, Rob [*producer Rob Davis*], encouraged me to do this when he said, "You play the slide the way you sing." It hadn't occurred to me that I could first sing the solo that I was hearing in my head, and then learn to play it on slide. That can help a lot for someone like me who didn't quite know how to begin. Soon I discovered that the more you experiment, the more your hands learn where melodies play out on the neck. I don't do this anymore, because so many ideas have lodged in my brain over time, but that's how I developed my slide soloing.

Years ago when I was recording the original version of "Lovin' Whiskey" [*for 1986's* I've Got a Rock in My Sock], Bud

"THE MORE YOU EXPERIMENT, THE MORE YOUR HANDS LEARN WHERE MELODIES PLAY OUT ON THE NECK"

Rizzo played the heart-wrenching solo on electric guitar. I sat next to him in the studio and sang what I had in mind. That's an example of what I'm talking about. If you can hear it and you can sing it, then you figure out how to play it. For the version of "Lovin' Whiskey" on *Ain't Nobody Worried*, I decided to follow what Bud did note for note on acoustic, and I feel like it has come full circle.

What are the origins of your very unique freehand plucking approach?
When I was growing up, my dad played claw-hammer banjo in a style called frailing. That style incorporates an up pluck, a down slam with your fingers, your palm landing on the instrument like a drum, and just this continuous back-and-forth, up-and-down and snap-and-thump. He showed it to me when I was about eight years old, and it embodied everything that I applied directly to Robert Johnson — that and a little bit of rolling out notes in a flamenco style.

You chose Elizabeth Cotten's "Freight Train" to close out *Ain't Nobody Worried*, and you write in the liner notes how she was the nanny to the Seeger children, and that you believe her "Cotten picking" could be the most influential guitar style ever created.
Yes, because her style is incorporated into almost every fingerpicking style on Earth. When I went to summer camp as a young girl it was run by Pete Seeger's brother, John Seeger. So it was a music-oriented camp, and everybody was playing Cotten picking. Everybody was introduced to the guitar with that alternating bass, and everybody knew about Elizabeth Cotten. So in my world, everybody recognized that style.

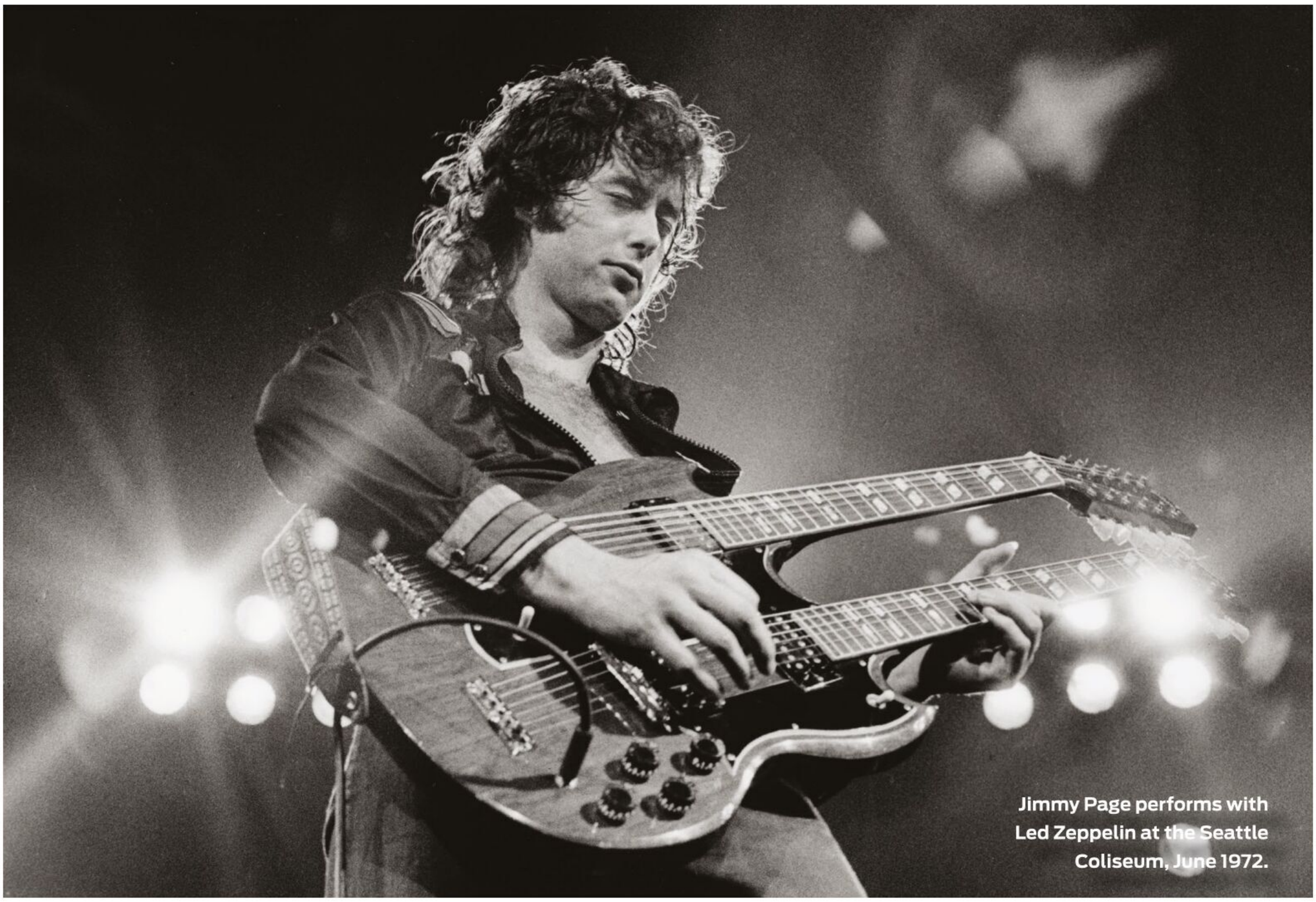
Who are some up-and-coming acoustic blues ladies that you feel deserve wider recognition?
Some of my guitar students really stand out to me. Lisa Rich, a super-talented blues guitarist from Connecticut, played "Preaching Blues" so hard it shook my whole house, but she has since gone on to other pursuits. Donna Herula, who was also once a student of mine, is another very strong slide player. She's been making records and gaining recognition. Heidi Holton is another former student who is doing well. I have produced two recordings for her and consider her to be a very strong up and coming artist. Shari Kane out of Ann Arbor, Michigan, is also an outstanding slide player. So there are definitely strong blues ladies out there building careers. The biggest piece of advice I like to give to players is to keep going until everybody knows who you are.

THE T-SHIRT CLUB FOR GUITARISTS

GUITAR SHOP TEES.COM

Get a new limited edition t-shirt every month featuring an iconic guitar shop.

Makes a Great Gift for Your Favorite Guitarist!



Jimmy Page performs with Led Zeppelin at the Seattle Coliseum, June 1972.

TIME REMEMBERED

As 2022 makes its exit, we pay a 50th anniversary tribute to 1972's essential guitar moments.

MORE ONLINE!

For audio of this lesson, go to **guitarplayer.com/hol22-lesson**

BY CHRIS BUONO

I FIND IT hard to imagine 1972 was 50 years ago. This is in large part due to the fact that I was born on June 5th of that monumental leap year. What? You didn't know 1972 is the longest year by the Coordinated Universal Time (UTC) standard? With the added day, plus two seconds, the six-string purveyors of the day took full advantage of the extra time on both electric and acoustic guitars. As this new decade was still revving its engines, rock and roll was expanding in 1972. With the guitar at the forefront, there was glam rock, shock rock, prog rock, southern rock and even jazz rock. What's more, there was the further development of soft rock and heavy metal alongside the burgeoning reggae and country rock genres. Also on the rise was a reverence for the album format. Thanks to my older brother Louis and his well-fortified stereo system, our Jersey Shore home was consistently shaking at the rafters with all the rock 1972 had to offer. I soaked it all in from my very beginnings. All things considered, it's safe to say I was born into this collection of essential guitar moments from 1972.

LET THERE BE ROCK

By the second year of the tumultuous 1970s, the world of rock had expanded into subsets that celebrated everything from platform shoes and glitter to fake blood and guillotines, and even included electrified southern-fried country and blues. This trifecta of disparate approaches garnered a worthy collection of guitar moments, starting with David Bowie's fab *The Rise and Fall of Ziggy Stardust and the Spiders From Mars*. Bowie's brilliance is matched by the prodigious playing of guitarist Mick Ronson. **Ex. 1** shows something similar to Ronson's opening salvo in "Ziggy Stardust," where

The Alice Cooper Group, June 28, 1972

ROBERT KNIGHT ARCHIVE/REDFERNS/GETTY IMAGES (PAGE); MICHAEL PUTLAND/GETTY IMAGES (COOPER)

open chords and arpeggiation patterns combine to make the prototypical glam-rock arena riff.

Shifting to the dark side, **Ex. 2** takes its cue from the title track of Alice Cooper's *School's Out*, highlighting the vibe of the incendiary E Dorian riff played by shock-rock stalwarts Glen Buxton and Michael Bruce. Completing the trio is an iteration of the Am riff of "One Way Out" (**Ex. 3**), from the Allman Brothers Band's quintessential southern rock album *Eat a Peach*, courtesy of Duane Allman and Dickie Betts. All three original tunes are as celebrated today as they were in 1972, from arenas to local watering holes.

OPENING LINES

The '70s was the decade of Detroit Iron, when nearly everyone drove a hot rod. If they weren't cranking an eight-track, they were listening to an FM rock station, which was in the beginning stages of a transformation to the album-oriented rock (AOR) format. Nothing had you leaning over to pump up the volume faster than a great guitar intro. Elliott Randall's opening A major pentatonic licks in the Steely Dan FM staple "Reelin' In the Years," from *Can't Buy a Thrill*, was a top contender. **Ex. 4** is inspired by and loosely based on this classic intro solo.

Another classic is the unforgettable opening of the Bowie-penned glam-rock anthem "All the Young Dudes," recorded by Mott the Hoople. **Ex. 5** brings to mind the dreamy relative major and minor arpeggios and modulating bends immortalized in that track. These are just two of the many songs that reeled you in from the first notes and entertained every type of rock apostle, both young and old, as they cruised America's highways.

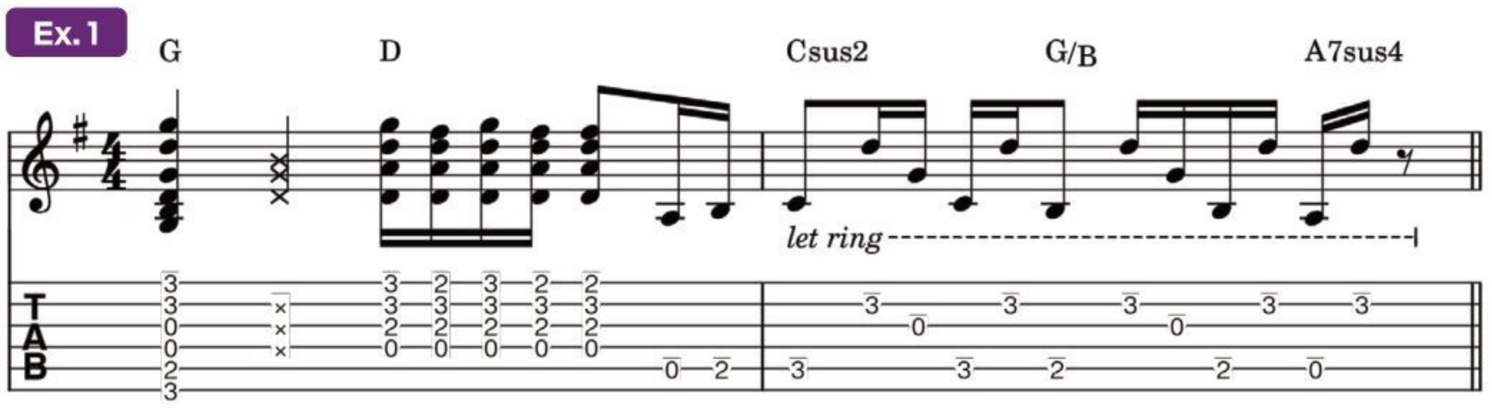
HAMMER OF THE GODS

Two of the three bands considered the creators of heavy metal released records in 1972. With Led Zeppelin between *Led Zeppelin IV* and *Houses of the Holy*, the void was filled by Black Sabbath's *Vol. 4* and Deep Purple's *Machine Head*. **Ex. 6** closely illustrates what Sabbath guitarist Tony

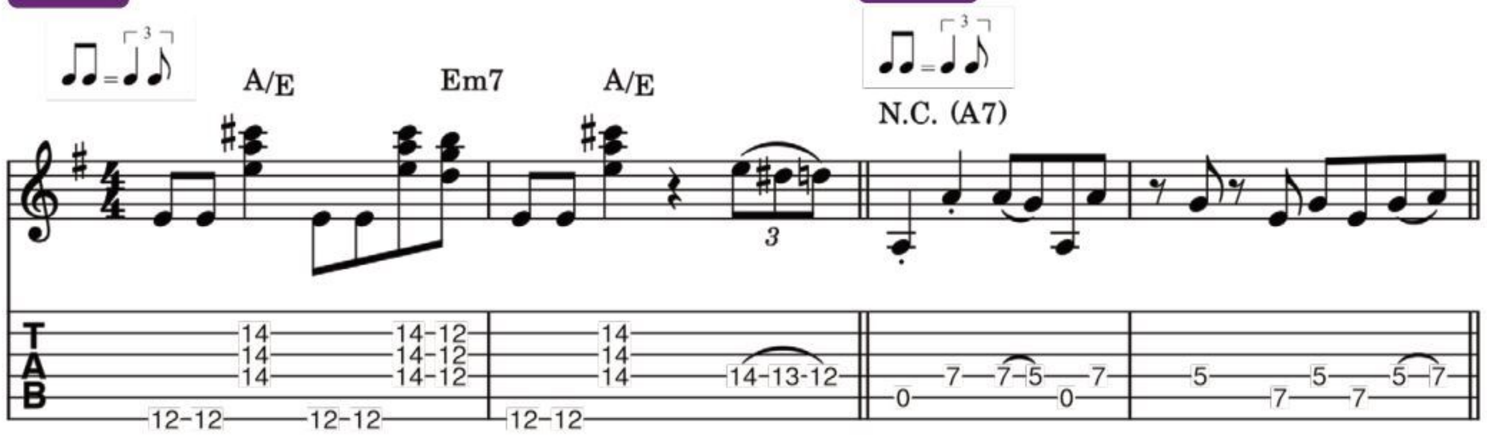
(from left) Steely Dan's Donald Fagen, Jim Hodder, Denny Dias, Walter Becker and Jeff "Skunk" Baxter

MICHAEL OCHS ARCHIVES/GETTY IMAGES

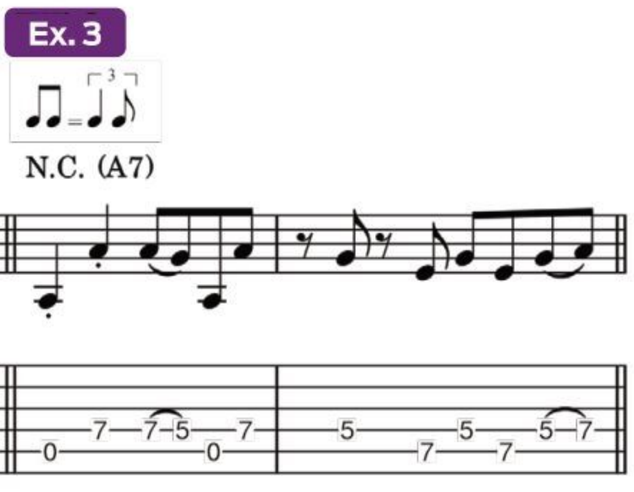
Ex. 1



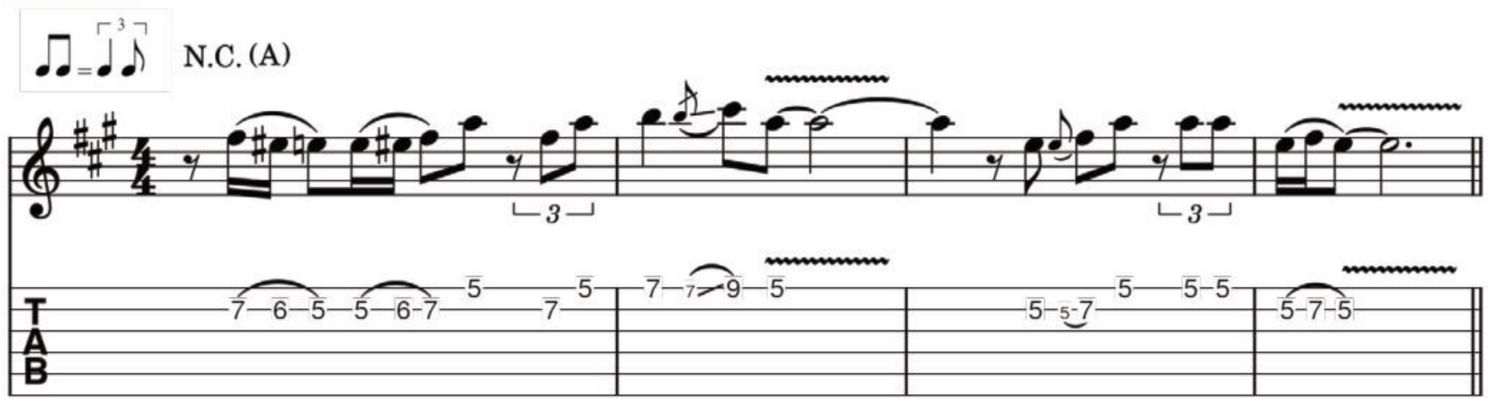
Ex. 2



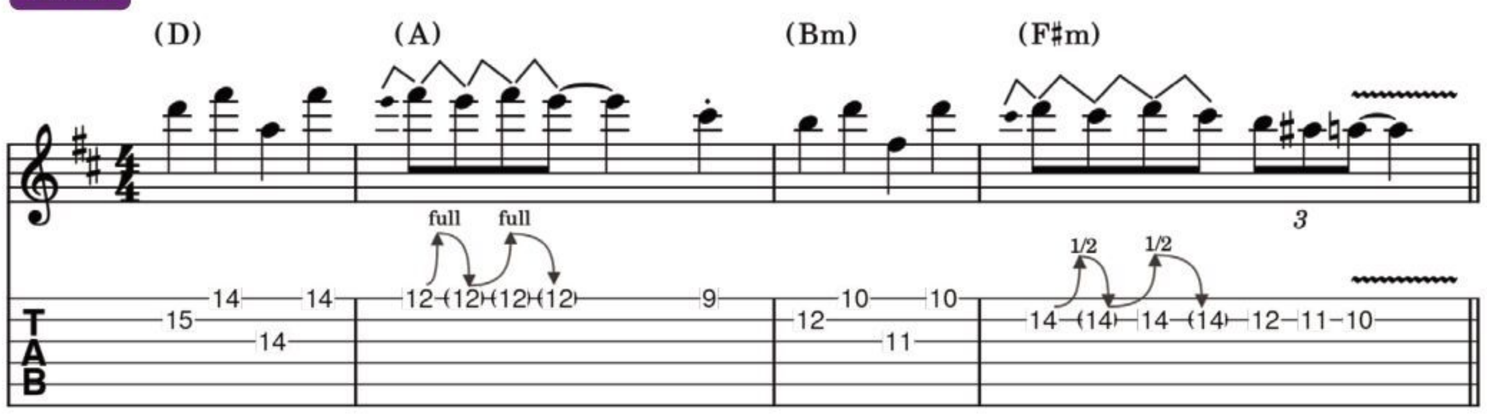
Ex. 3



Ex. 4



Ex. 5



Iommi laid down on *Vol.4*'s "Snowblind," with his signature power chording and speaker-melting gain in check.

As for Deep Purple's Ritchie Blackmore, he was in his creative prime at the time that the group dropped its magnum opus, *Machine Head*. Much like

Tony Iommi and Ozzy Osbourne perform in 1973

Zep's fourth outing, *Machine Head* featured timeless tunes that have proven their longevity to this day, including the venerable "Smoke on the Water." While the opening riff has ascended into a ubiquitity for rock guitarists the world over, Ritchie's fiery solo over a power chord backdrop in the key of G minor showcases such signature Blackmore-isms as pre- (or "ghost") bends, adjacent-string rolls and 16th-note linear flurries. This is all on display in **Ex. 7**, which presents a reworking of some key licks from this solo. Though in its infancy at the time, metal began with these pioneering bands and with albums and moments like these.

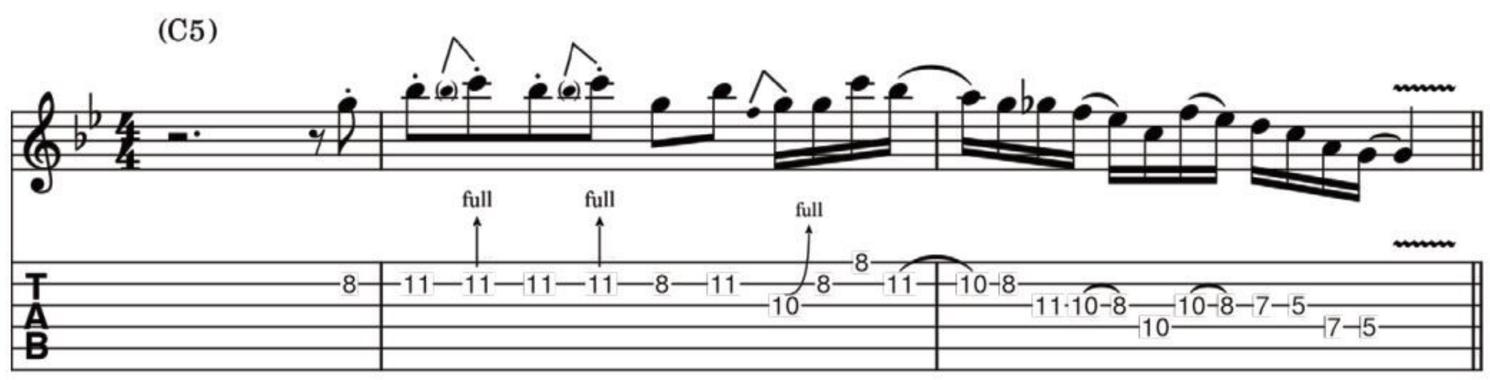
EVERYONE IS EXPERIENCED

But 1972 wasn't all about high-gain licks and riffs.The influence of Jimi Hendrix, who died in 1970, was felt across the guitar pantheon. Indicative of the time were a pair of low-gain opening riffs from two different worlds but in no less capable hands. **Ex. 8** is patterned after a moment from one of prog rock's most endearing releases, *Close to the Edge*, where perpetual ambassador Steve Howe threw down biting Hendrix-like chordal comping ideas in the key of E minor at the top of "Siberian Khatru."

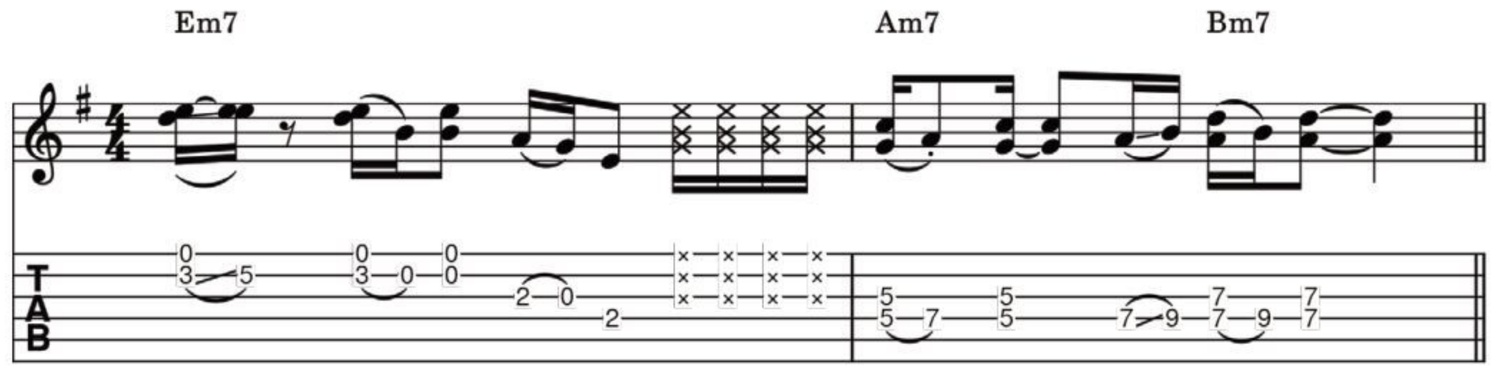
Ex. 9 offers a taste of the kind of dynamic-duo guitar work of the Doobie Brothers' Tom Johnston and Patrick

Ex. 6

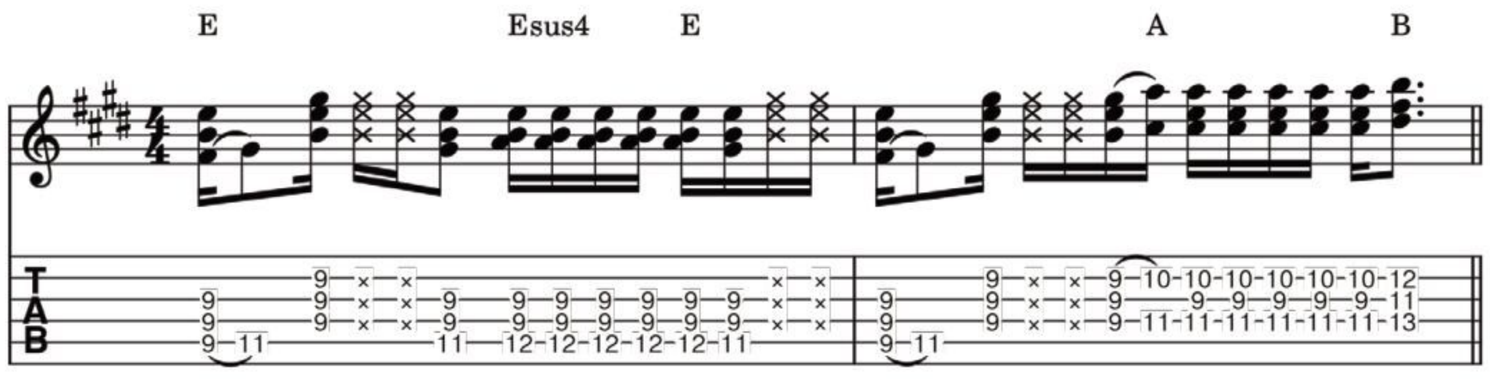
Ex. 7



Ex. 8



Ex. 9



IAN DICKSON/REDFERNS/GETTY IMAGES

Simmons on the endearing hit "Listen To the Music," a moment that still motivates muscle-car drivers of yore to turn up the volume at the first hammer-on into that E/G♯ triad.

GROOVE COLLECTIVE

But cleaner tones and booty-shaking grooves were also heard in 1972, thanks to the impact of a Jamaican film called *The Harder They Come*, which starred musician Jimmy Cliff. While the movie was released to much fanfare (on the very same day I started my journey to 50), it was the film's soundtrack that made history, as it's widely regarded as the world's introduction to reggae. **Ex. 10** is inspired by the infectious opening groove heard in the Cliff classic "You Can Get It If You Really Want," which features hallmark reggae rhythm guitar approaches with its tightly voiced top-string triads, anchored to the upbeat and treated with some staccato phrasing.

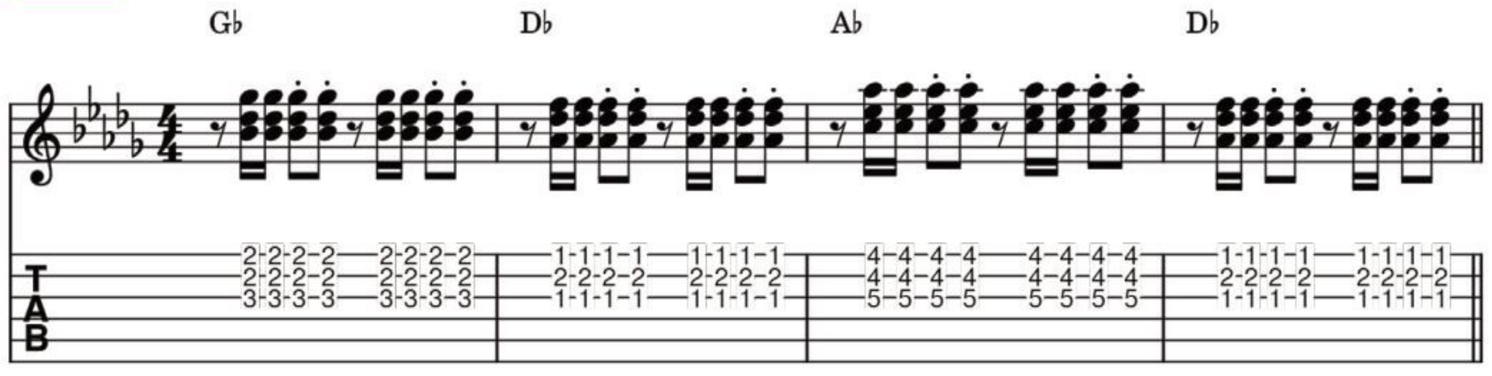
Back on the mainland, James Brown and Al Green were creating some of their most significant works. The Godfather of Soul put Hearlon "Cheese" Martin's lock-tight precision into the limelight with "Get On the Good Foot" from the album of the same name. An homage to Martin's hypnotic single-note staccato phrasing is paid in **Ex. 11**.

Adding to the title tracks explored, the beloved gem from Al Green's *Let's Stay Together* features the sultry guitar of work of Mabon "Teenie" Hodges perfectly nested between Green's enthralling vocal performance. Looking at **Ex. 12** reveals a remodeling of four bars from this treasured work.

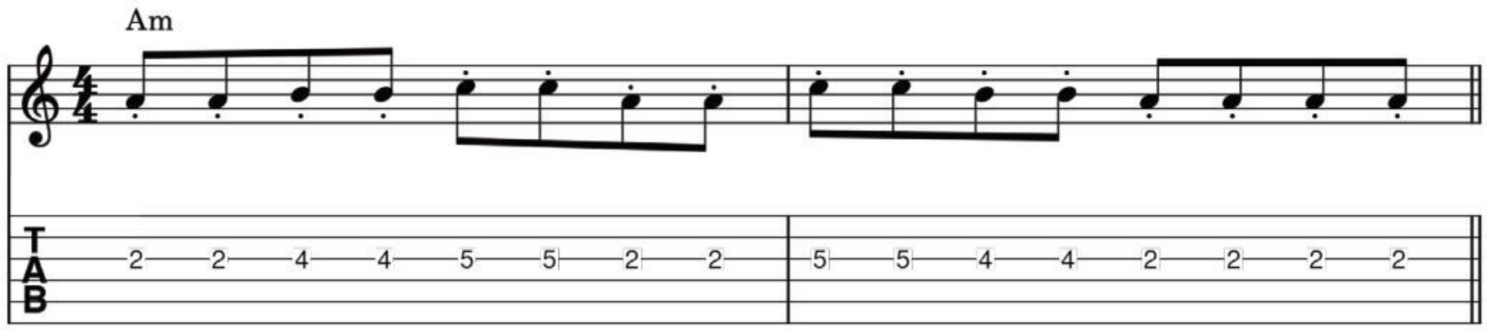
UNPLUGGED

Although the era of the chimerical Les Paul/Marshall monster had fully arrived by 1972, it didn't quell the acoustic guitar's substantial presence, which had solidified in the 1960s. In fact, acoustic guitars were behind some of the most successful single releases of the year, including Paul Simon's controversial "Me and Julio Down By the Schoolyard," America's mesmerizing "Ventura Highway" and soft-rock troubadours Seals and Crofts' irresistible "Summer

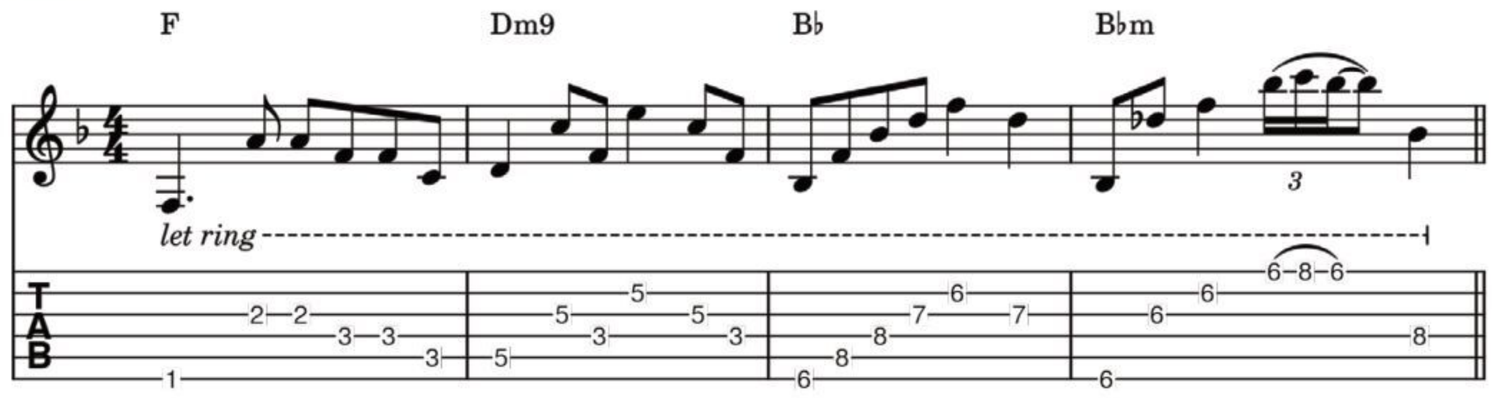
Ex. 10



Ex. 11



Ex. 12

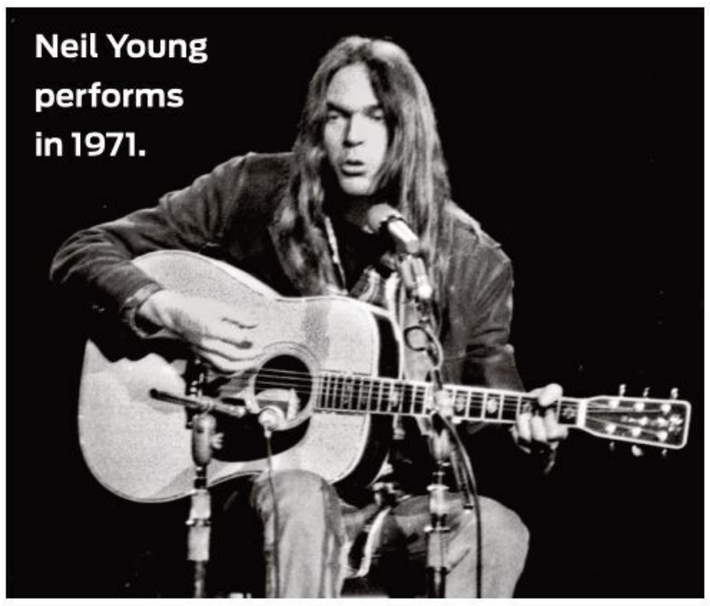


(from left) The Doobie Brothers' Pat Simmons, John Hartman, Dave Shogren and Tom Johnston pose in 1970.

MICHAEL OCHS ARCHIVES/GETTY IMAGES

Breeze." The main themes of all three songs have been reinterpreted in **Examples 13–15**. Aside from Simon's syncopated voice-led triads, the other two riffs make ample use of the acoustic guitar's penchant for open strings.

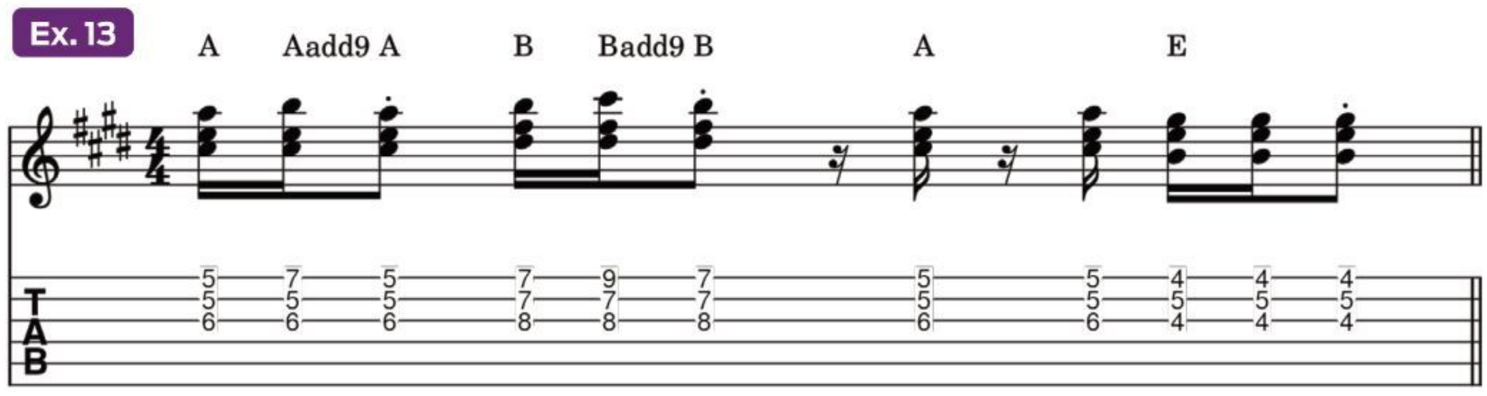
Not to be outdone by his American counterparts, Canadian-born Neil Young released the best-selling record of the year with *Harvest*, which boasted the number one hit "Heart of Gold." A rendition of the perfectly sparse presentation of Em and D chords is found in **Ex. 16**.


Neil Young performs in 1971.

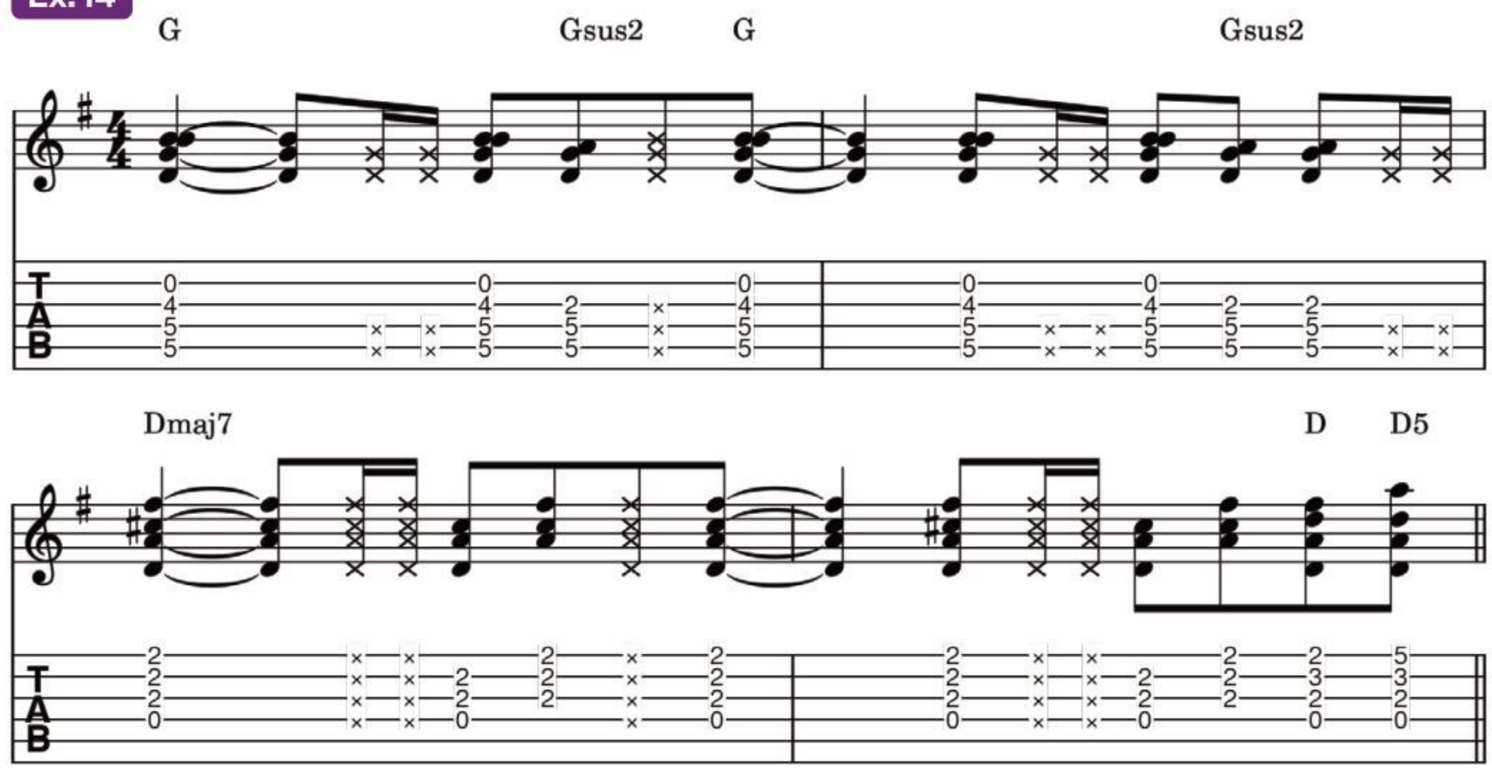
OUTRO

With countless guitar moments still to gush over, it's important to note that 1972 was also brimming with superbly constructed albums that had massive impact and further bolstered the emerging AOR radio format. The year delivered classics that featured now-mythic guitarist pairings, including the Rolling Stones' *Exile on Main St.* (Keith Richards and Mick Taylor), Jethro Tull's *Thick As a Brick* (Martin Barre and Ian Anderson), Genesis's *Foxtrot* (Steve Hackett and Mike Rutherford), and the Eagles' self-titled debut (Bernie Leadon and Glenn Frey), which helped bring country rock to prominence. Before the year was out, Deep Purple went on to release the *Made in Japan* live album, and Stevie Wonder released his own pair with *Music of My Mind* and the seminal *Talking Book*. The latter gave the world the funk-rock classic "Superstition," which features a punchy Hohner Clavinet keyboard riff that has been appropriated by guitarists in countless cover bands. If all these moments and genre births are any indication of the benefits to an augmented leap year, I say bring on the next one UTC.

Ex. 13

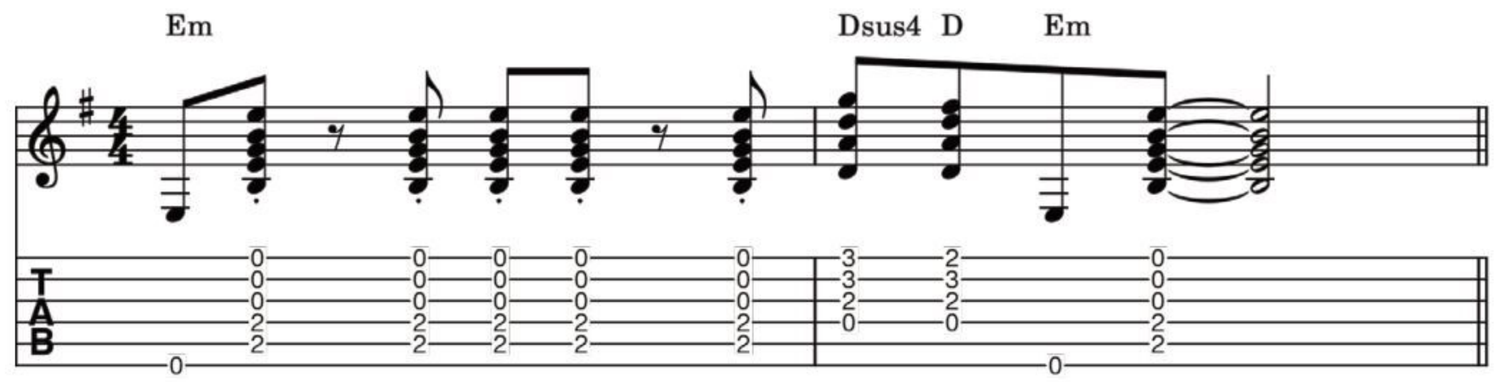


Ex. 14



Ex. 15

Ex. 16



Chris Buono is a top-selling TrueFire Artist with nearly 50 instructional videos, and a featured instructor on Guitarinstructor.com. Bookending his years as a Berklee professor, he authored eight books, including the popular Guitarist's Guide to Music Reading *and his most recent publication,* How to Play Outside Guitar Lines.

GIJSBERT HANEKROOT/REDFERNS/GETTY IMAGES

GOOD TO GO

WHENEVER · WHEREVER

A passion for playing means that inspiration can strike anytime, anywhere. With Elixir® Strings you know that when you pick up your guitar it's going to sound great—time and time again. That's because our featherweight coating protects your strings from the elements, keeping corrosion away and allowing your tone to sound great for longer, in any environment.

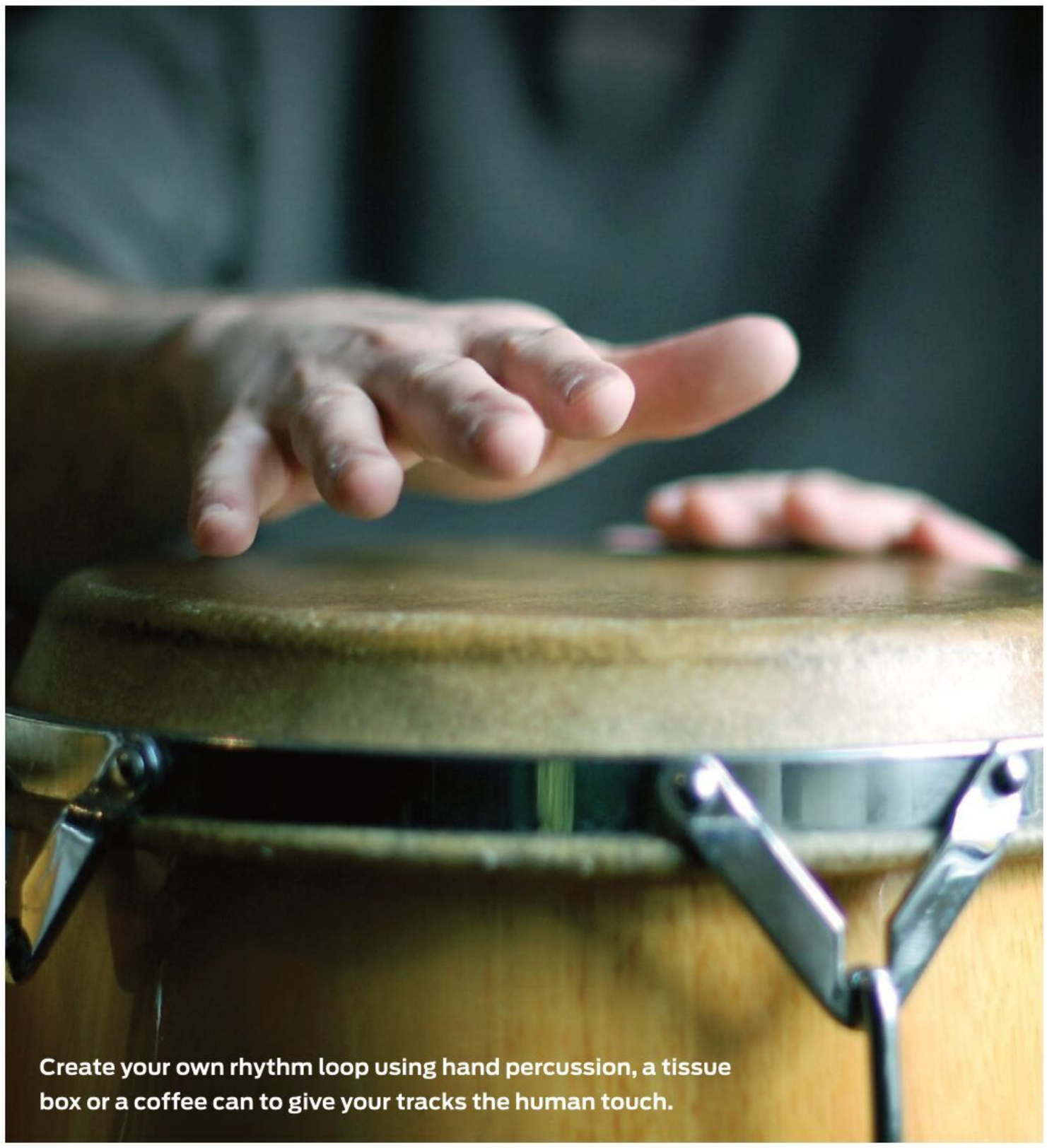
***Elixir* Strings. Performance-ready with long-lasting tone.**

GORE, *Together, improving life*, ELIXIR, NANOWEB, POLYWEB, OPTIWEB, GREAT TONE • LONG LIFE, "e" icon, and designs are trademarks of W. L. Gore & Associates. ©2009-2022 W. L. Gore & Associates, Inc.

Recording Organic Rhythms

How to make your grooves sound more lively and less metronomic.

BY JIMMY LESLIE



Create your own rhythm loop using hand percussion, a tissue box or a coffee can to give your tracks the human touch.

TALKING WITH FOLK blues musicologist Rory Block (*see page 70*) reminded me of another conversation I had with Eric Johanson on the subject of recording acoustic blues, prompting this consideration of perhaps the greatest factor when it comes to recording in analog versus digital: the click track. The upside in a digital audio workstation is unlimited editability, including the ease of creating a compilation of best sections from several cuts. Instruments can be layered separately and individually, with no peer pressure. The downside is the loss of a true performance feel. Unless you're a "human metronome" like Tommy Emmanuel, your rhythm winds up sounding safe and robotic as you cling to the click track. So what to do?

GET LOOPY WITH YOURSELF

Instead of a click track, create a loop on your own, just as one might do with a looper in a solo performance situation. Then the guide track has your feel, even if it is solely a percussive part. In his July 2021 Frets feature, Johanson noted, "Something in the feel gets lost when I try tempo mapping to a digital grid. It's like being held back. When I livestream, I'll start by scratching out a rhythm on the strings using either a pick or my fingernails, depending on the plucking attack for the tune. For recording, I use the loop instead of a click track."

Block says, "I use homemade drum sets, meaning oatmeal boxes and coffee cans played with salad spoons, sticks and so on to create a custom click track, because it humanizes the tempo. It still feels automated if you only use one measure, but if you get four good measures of well-played hand rhythm, it makes the song sound more interesting."

VARY THE CLICK SOUNDS AND TEMPOS

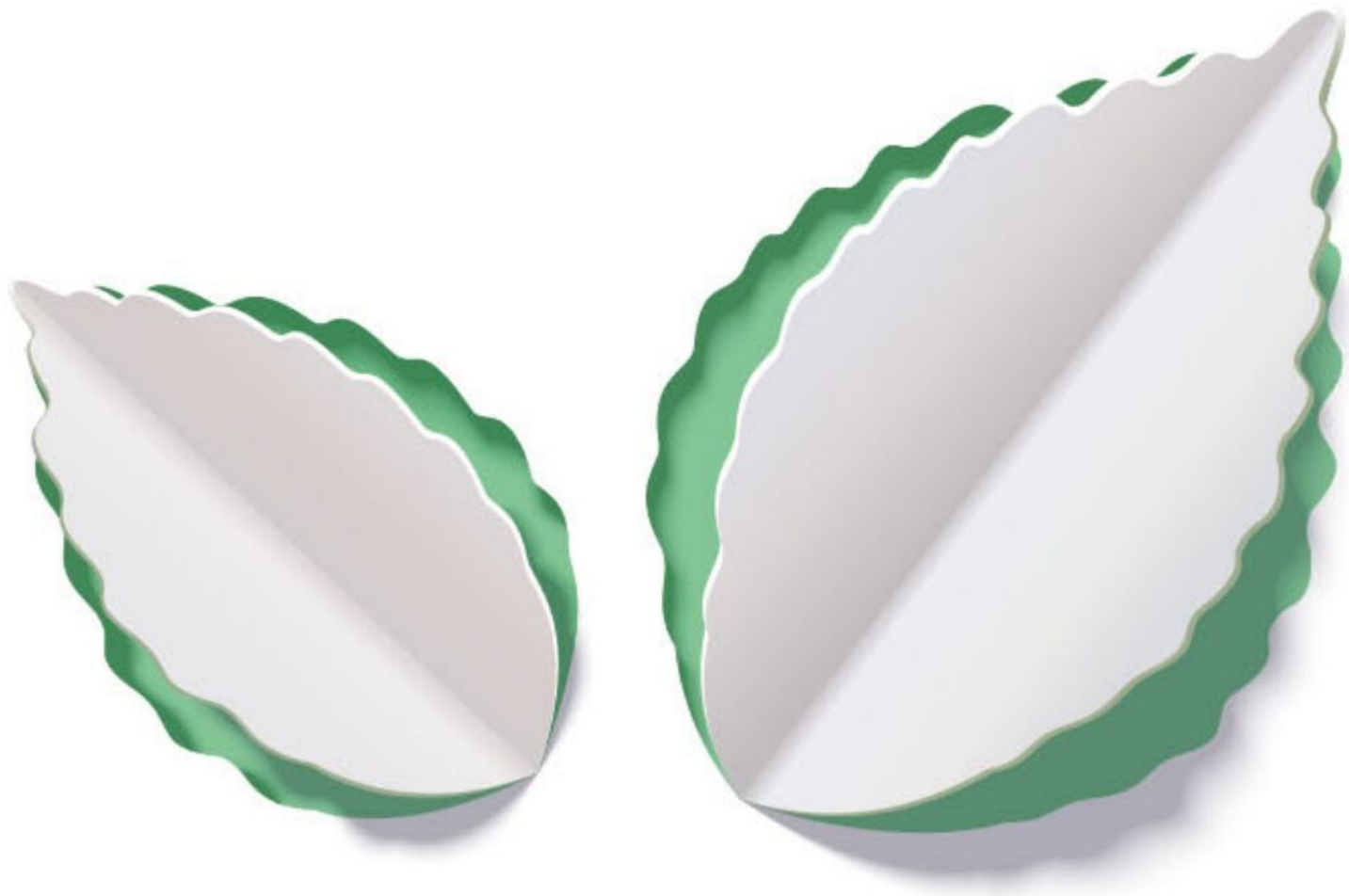
Johanson and Block add that they sometimes use sound replacements in their loops. The sound replacement tools in most digital audio workstations allow you to trigger drum tones from your favorite sound sources, or even samples of yourself playing them. Block does both, depending on the situation. She may have the engineer meticulously replace things, hit by hit, sound by sound, or designate a particular percussive element to trigger a chosen snare or kick drum in a given loop.

Johanson said, "I use XLN Audio's Addictive Trigger, which allows me to pick a point in the loop that I feel is best for triggering an organic kick drum sound. To fill out the percussion, I might use handclaps or even a can of cookie sprinkles as a shaker. I'll keep it low in the mix, but you can definitely feel the thump of the kick drum, which gives the recording a sense of gravitas without getting in the way of the guitars."

Another tip: Even if you use a click track, it can be varied. It's pretty simple to set different click tempos for sections of a song arrangement. I wound up using three different ones on "The Spirit of '69" from my cosmic rock project Spirit Hustler. The idea was to have each of the sections grow progressively and slightly faster, kind of like "Stairway to Heaven." Can you imagine what that would have sounded like if Led Zeppelin had recorded to a static click?

Jimmy Leslie has been Frets editor since 2016. See many Guitar Player*– and Frets-related videos on his YouTube channel, and learn about his acoustic/electric rock group at spirithustler.com.*

JACQUI ELLIOT-WILLIAMS/GETTY IMAGES



PAPER LOVES TREES

U.S. forests, which provide wood for making paper,
paper-based packaging and many other products,
have been growing by over 1,200 **NFL football fields** every day!

Discover the story of paper

www.lovepaperna.org

Source: According to the UN Food and Agriculture Organization's 2020 Global Forest Resources Assessment, U.S. forest area expanded by an average of 605,000 acres per year between 1990 and 2020.
An NFL football field is 1.32 acres in size.

Love Paper is a registered trademark for Two Sides Ltd. Registered in the U.S., UK and other countries and used with permission.

LOVE PAPER®

TAYLOR

514ce Urban Ironbark Grand Auditorium

TESTED BY JIMMY LESLIE

TAYLOR IS MAKING a huge move by introducing a new, sustainably sourced tonewood that the manufacturer has dubbed "Urban Ironbark," which it's offering on two re-imagined incarnations of its venerable 500 Series: the 512ce Grand Concert and, on review here, the 514ce Grand Auditorium. The 500 Series is a stalwart in the heart of the Taylor range, so they wouldn't mess with it without good reason and high confidence.

"Where we get our wood matters," explains Andy Powers, Taylor's chief guitar designer, president and CEO. The company sources red ironbark via its lauded urban wood initiative that gives old trees from city settings around Southern California a second life as guitars, hence the "urban" designation. The interesting development here, it's replacing mahogany and being paired with Sitka spruce, rather than the Western Red Cedar that has been the hallmark of the 500 Series for decades.

"I love the combination personally," Powers explains, "but it was time to make a change in order to create a spot for another set of woods. We loved the bold sound we got by pairing a torrefied spruce top with Urban Ironbark, and felt that was a great combination for this wood's introduction into our set list. Its unique sonic color shares some similarities with a harder, denser, rosewood-like material, and some of the warm woody qualities of mahogany. It isn't a direct substitution for mahogany or rosewood. In wanting to create a wider variety of instruments, it made more sense to create this new guitar in a way that keeps our offerings fresh and unique."

I'm a longtime 514ce player, so I was very curious about the new kid in town. It certainly looks like a 514ce. The back and sides appear very similar to the rich golden brown hue of mahogany, the primary difference being Ironbark's lack of darker grain lines. The glossy shaded edgeburst finish cast upon a roasted Sitka spruce top makes it appear quite similar to the reddish hue of cedar as well. Appointments such as Aerial fretboard inlays made of Italian acrylic, a single ring abalone rosette, plus faux tortoise binding and pickguard round out a fine fresh take on the classic 514 aesthetic.

SPECIFICATIONS

514ce Urban Ironbark Grand Auditorium
CONTACT taylorguitars.com
PRICE $3,299 street, hardshell case included

NUT WIDTH 1.75", black graphite
NECK Neo-tropical mahogany
FRETBOARD West African ebony, 25.5" scale
FRETS 20
TUNERS Taylor nickel-plated
BODY Solid Urban Ironbark back & sides, solid torrefied Sitka spruce top [V-Class bracing]
BRIDGE West African ebony with compensated Micarta saddle
ELECTRONICS Taylor ES2 with volume, bass, and treble controls
FACTORY STRINGS Phosphor Bronze Light
WEIGHT 4.7 lbs (as tested)
BUILT USA

KUDOS Eco-conscious with strong, responsive tone, exceptional versatility and playability
CONCERNS New wood combination might take some getting used to for traditional 514ce fans

The Urban Ironbark captures the sonic spirit of a traditional 514ce as well, with its own particular distinctions. The first tonal consideration is the new wood combination, but it's also worth noting that the 514ce was renovated with V-Class bracing in 2018, so the V-Class Urban Ironbark's tone naturally has more in common with that incarnation than it does a vintage one. Art Thompson reviewed the first V-Class 514ce in *GP*'s Holiday 2018 issue, so that's long gone, but I had my 1998 514ce on hand for reference.

The vintage one isn't as holistically intonated, nor does it have such a crisp, complex tone as the Urban Ironbark, which also has better sustain and easier playability. I found the vintage 514ce to have a stronger, more clearly fundamental sound, best suited for handling an aggressive attack and not as well suited for subtlety. That said, the Urban Ironbark sounds firm and full in the context of Taylor's modern, more high-fidelity tone. It possesses a combination of sweetness, strength, detail and balance that's right in line with the traditional hallmark of the 500 Series. The 514's tone is not as burly or complex as an 814, nor as delicate and nuanced as the new koa 714 reviewed in the November issue. The 514ce Urban Ironbark is fundamentally like a fastball in the middle of the Taylor range. It's extremely versatile, both tonally and in terms of playability. Whether it ultimately veers right or left depends on your own delivery and your own spin.

The 514 Urban Ironbark accommodates all manners of plucking approaches in a slew of musical styles from rock to pop to country. Of course, the Grand Auditorium body shape with its Venetian cutaway and ES2 electronics has a lot to do with said versatility as well. Its neck has a modern/classic Taylor profile, and the factory action is nice and easy, making it fabulous for fingerpicking or precision plectrum playing and a little less so for some of the heavy-handed, percussive stuff I like to do on the old dog. I was able to dial that in a bit better with slight loosening of the truss rod, but this modern model is simply more refined and a bit less of a wild beast. The intonation and action are incredibly consistent all the way up to the top of the neck, so playing pretty much anything anywhere is fair game.

The 514ce comes equipped with Taylor's proprietary Expression System 2 pickup and preamp system, which not only does a fine job of delivering the Urban Ironbark's acoustic qualities through amplification, but also beefs it up a bit for a bold stage-worthy tone.

The 514ce Urban Ironbark is a nifty guitar that I'd recommend to pretty much any player looking for a flexible acoustic-electric instrument. I probably wouldn't trade my vintage 514ce, but that's largely because I'm attached to using it for heavy-handed percussive playing onstage in a noisy rock band. I may prefer the Urban Ironbark for playing more delicate stuff in a quieter environment. I'd love to hear Urban Ironbark back and sides paired with western red cedar for a more apples-to-apples assessment. Vintage to modern comparisons aside, this 514ce is a remarkable instrument featuring an exhilarating development on the eco-tonewood frontier, Urban Ironbark. Kudos to Taylor for taking the initiative and for being bold with its initial application by re-imagining a modern classic in the 500 Series. We eagerly await further developments with Urban Ironbark, truly a rising star on Taylor's bright horizon.

PRS

HDRX 20

Guitar Player Editors' Pick

TESTED BY ART THOMPSON

SMALL AMPS THAT kick ass are always welcome, and PRS just made it a whole lot easier to enjoy what their bigger HDRX 50- and 100-watt amps have to offer by introducing the new HDRX 20. It's a smaller and lighter version of the behemoth 100-watt head that PRS based on a particular Marshall Super Lead amplifier used by Jimi Hendrix at Woodstock and which now resides in Seattle's Museum of Pop Culture.

I tested the HDRX in the July 2022 issue, and at the time it was hinted that a lower-powered version would eventually be offered. Naturally, the reaction here was: bring it on! Right off the bat, the HDRX 20 threw me a curve. I expected to see EL84 or 6V6 output tubes, because they're so ubiquitous to amps of this power class. Instead, it uses a pair of very American Tung-Sol 5881 tubes (running in Class AB), which are actually rated at 25 watts apiece. When I think of Hendrix and Marshall, I think British valves, but PRS obviously had good reasons to go with 5881s, and I'm guessing it had to do with headroom, resistance to compression and just a more muscular presentation.

Inside the Tolex-covered birch-ply cabinet, a steel chassis houses a large PCB and a smaller one for the rear-panel speaker jacks, bias test points and bias pot. The power-tube sockets and the transformers and choke are chassis-mounted and hand-wired to the PCB. As on the 100-watt HDRX, there's only an on/off switch. PRS says the high-value electrolytic filter caps provide sufficient charging ramp to prevent the tubes from being smacked with high voltage when the juice is flicked on, and that's why there's no standby switch.

Starting from the left side of the front panel, the controls are presence, bass, middle, treble, high-mid gain switch, master volume, treble volume (with bright switch), bass volume and single input jack. The two channels are internally jumpered, so you can use them individually or combined to get extra gain and take advantage of their different voicings.

The rear panel has five speaker jacks (see the specs chart for impedance choices), three bias test points (V4, V5, common) and a screwdriver-adjustable bias pot. It's a simple procedure to bias the tubes when a new set is installed: Set your DVM to millivolts (mV), stick the black probe into common and the red probe into V4 or V5, and look for a reading of 25 to 30mV, adjusting the pot if necessary.

After unboxing the HDRX 20 and firing it up to check that everything was in order, I took the head and PRS cabinet (which measures 24 by 18 by 10 ½ inches) to an outdoor gig where I could turn it up reasonably loud and spend some quality time with it. I set all the controls halfway and kept the high-mid gain switch on and the bright switch either off, with a Fender Vintage II Tele, or on, with a Gibson Memphis 1961 ES-335. The HDRX 20 proved a formidable little beast that delivered plenty of volume and had enough clean headroom to keep everything sounding clear, tight and dynamic with a selection of distortion pedals, in this case a Warm Audio Centavo and Warmdrive [*see reviews on page 88*] and a Fulltone OCD. I barely touched the amp's EQ knobs and mainly adjusted the presence to suit

SPECIFICATIONS

HDRX 20

CONTACT prsguitars.com
PRICE $799

CHANNELS Two (internally jumped)
CONTROLS (from left) Presence, bass, middle, treble, high-mid gain switch, master volume, treble volume, bright switch, bass volume
POWER 20 watts
TUBES Three JJ ECC83S (12AX7) preamp tubes, two Tung-Sol (Electro-Harmonix) 5881 power tubes
SPEAKER Tested with PRS closed-back 1x12 with Celestion G12H-75 16Ω speaker ($999)
EXTRAS Bias jacks and pot. Five speaker jacks: 1x4Ω or 2 x8Ω; 1x8Ω or 2x16Ω; 1x16Ω
WEIGHT 19.78 lbs head; 25.18 lbs cab (tested)
BUILT Indonesia (designed in Maryland, USA)

KUDOS A super simple delivery system for those seeking old-school Plexi tone. Light and compact
CONCERNS Some might wish for a standby switch

single-coils or humbuckers, so the HDRX definitely passes the no-fuss test when switching between different guitars.

The HDRX 20 is really in its element when you crank up both volumes, the tone controls and the presence knob, which itself adds a bit more gain when dimed. It's a majestic sound, with the amp revved up enough to appreciate that low-end thump and crunching upper-midrange bite. The amp is designed so that you can really push the treble without it sounding harsh, and this is also where you can appreciate how Paul Reed Smith and amp designer Doug Sewell took great care to develop vintage-sounding transformers, especially the output transformer, which contributes so much to the HDRX's smooth, late-'60s Plexi tone, and how the amp responds so musically to your playing touch and guitar volume changes. In keeping with the Super Lead formula, the HDRX 20 stays tight at high volume, and the master volume (which is not present on the

HDRX 50 or 100) is a good addition here as it allows for tailoring the output to smaller rooms without the need for an attenuator, which was an absolute necessity with the bigger HDRX amps.

The HDRX 20 is great choice for anyone who loves classic Marshall tone and wants it in the purest form possible. This compact, lightweight amp is a pleasure to take on gigs, and it's quite affordable too, considering what many boutique 20-watters will set you back. Kudos to PRS for creating an amplifier that gives more players the opportunity to experience old-Plexi tone in a package that really makes sense for working musicians. Some amps may have a ton of functions, but the HDRX 20 is a ton of fun, and that's why it gets an Editors' Pick Award.

WARM AUDIO

Centavo and Warmdrive

TESTED BY ART THOMPSON

WARM AUDIO IS known best for its high-end tube and solid-state studio equipment and microphones. But the Austin-based company has also produced a growing number of replica stompboxes that include the Jet Phaser, Foxy Tone Box (i.e. Foxx Tone Machine), and the new Centavo and Warmdrive pedals on review here. These two boxes clone a pair of famed ’90s designs, namely the Klon Centaur and the Hermida Audio Zendrive.

Like the original Centaur, the Centavo has a large custom-cast “champagne” enclosure and black pointer knobs for gain, treble and output. The input, output and nine-volt adapter jacks are on the back, along with a mod slider switch that provides extended low-frequency response in the up position. Removing two screws is all it takes to remove the thick aluminum bottom plate to expose the PC board with hand-wired connections to the jacks, foot switch and Mod switch. There’s even a cast-in compartment for the unit’s nine-volt battery (not included).

SPECIFICATIONS

Centavo

CONTACT warmaudio.com
PRICE $179

CONTROLS Gain, treble, output, two-position Mod switch, I/O input, output, 9VDC jack (also operates on battery power)
EXTRAS Original-style art deco aluminum housing
SIZE 5” x 6.75” x 2.25”
WEIGHT 2 lbs

KUDOS A great-sounding medium-gain overdriver with rich, tube-like tone
CONCERNS Takes up a fair chunk of pedalboard real estate

As per the original circuit specs, Centavo features TL072 op-amps, vintage-style diodes and a charge-pump voltage regulator, which is basically a type of DC-to-DC converter that can increase or decrease input voltage to a specific level. The pedal also has a buffered bypass.

The Centavo is a smooth-sounding overdrive with a nice, tube-like tone and feel. Tested with a new Fender Vintage II ’51 Telecaster (reviewed in the December 2022 issue) and a ’59 Historic Les Paul, the pedal sounded excellent when used like a booster by keeping the gain on the low side and cranking up the potent volume control. This worked great to coax more grind from a Deluxe Reverb with its volume about halfway up, using higher gain settings as needed to elicit more distortion. Even when dimed, however, the Centavo’s distortion is responsive to your picking and not overly compressed. Pairing it with another pedal to get more sustain is a good option, and here’s where the buffered output helps maintain the warmth, transparency and juiciness that makes the Centavo so cool in the first place.

The Warmdrive is Warm Audio’s take on the famed Zendrive pedal that put Hermida Audio on the stompbox map back in the late ’90s and was championed by Robben Ford among other super pickers. As such, the pedal features gain, volume, tone (post op-amp clipping) and a voice control that, situated before the op-amp clipping stage, increases treble as it’s turned clockwise. Unlike the Centavo, none of the circuit components are viewable from the PCB’s back side (aside from a bit of wiring to the nine-volt adapter jack and the connector for a battery) but the list includes original style 2N7000 Mosfets, a NE5532 op-amp, carbon-comp resistors and 1N34A germanium Schottky BAT41 diodes. Also unlike the Centavo, the Warmdrive is a true-bypass design.

The Warmdrive is a flexible distortion pedal with moderate gain and abundant output that allow it to play well with amps of various gain structures. I tested it with a Fender Deluxe Reverb, a Matchless Chieftain 2x12 combo and the very high-gain Blackstar St. James 6L6 1x12 combo. Because of how the tone and voice controls are configured

you can set them around one o'clock and 11 o'clock respectively, and have plenty of latitude to sculpt tones with single-coils or humbuckers, utilizing the controls' interactive nature to get buttery tones by using a lower tone setting and turning up the voice knob to enhance definition. Oppositely, you could run tone high and pull back the brights with the voice control to get more bite and presence.

Touch sensitive and very responsive to guitar volume changes, the Warmdrive is a great choice if you like leaving a distortion pedal on and using your guitar volume to control how clean or gritty you want your sound. As a kind of "desert island" distortion box, the Warmdrive has that innate ability to shape-shift to suit the situation, and is a pedal you can count on to deliver the goods when the venue's Twin Reverb might be your only option.

SPECIFICATIONS

Warmdrive
CONTACT warmaudio.com
PRICE $149

CONTROLS Volume, gain, tone, voice, 9VDC jack (also operates on battery power)
EXTRAS True bypass
SIZE 4.75" x 2.5" x 2.25"
WEIGHT .75 lbs

KUDOS A flexible and smooth sounding distortion box. Easy to dial-in courtesy of its tone and voice controls
CONCERNS None

EARTHQUAKER DEVICES

Sunn Life Pedal V3

TESTED BY DAVE HUNTER

THE SUNN LIFE Pedal is a collaboration between Akron-based effects manufacturer EarthQuaker Devices and the Seattle ambient metal band Sunn O))). It effectively reproduces the sound created when the group's guitarists slam their multiple stacks of vintage 100-watt Sunn amps with excessive fuzz, overdrive, octave and boost, creating a demonic wall like no other. Now in its third incarnation, the Life Pedal has been modified to re-create the analog octave effect from a vintage Shin-Ei FY2 fuzz and FY6 octave-fuzz into a white-face RAT distortion, with a MOSFET booster following, to allow plenty of amp slamming from a single pedal.

The controls can be a hair confusing, since, in the spirit of many old pedals, they don't follow a logical right-to-left order. Amplitude, far left, is the output for the distortion side, while distortion is rather obviously the gain/drive for that stage, and filter is a RAT-like EQ. A three-way rotary switch labeled clip selects between op amp, asymmetrical and symmetrical clipping. Octave blends in the octave fuzz, and magnitude is the boost. With all this in mind, the three foot switches for amplitude, octave and magnitude become self-explanatory, though it's worth noting that they are soft-touch true-bypass, using EarthQuaker's proprietary Flexi-Switch Technology. Hit and release them for traditional on/off, or hit and hold for momentary on.

The single input and output are on the pedal's front face, along with an expression pedal jack for remote control of the octave blend, and a standard center-negative jack for your nine-volt DC supply. The Life Pedal V3 comes in a rugged, black textured metal enclosure that's not overly huge considering all it contains.

I don't happen to have a 100-watt Sunn full stack on hand, but a silverface 50-watt Fender Bassman head and 2x12 cab stood in well for testing, played with a Gibson Les Paul and a Fender Jazzmaster. As such, with the Life Pedal engaged and dialed in, I can't imagine better or more immediate access to doomy, droney art-metal escapades. The pedal still sounds eviscerating and appropriately menacing even at lower volumes, but the full-bore experience requires big decibels to approach the band's fully transcendental sonics. With the Bassman's volume wound up beyond one o'clock, the pedal delivered with thick, chewy endless sustain and willing feedback. It's mayhem in a box, and a wild ride, for sure.

The voicing and character of the distortion side are quite familiar, yet EQD has rendered them with impressive girth, texture and relative clarity, and the three-way clipping option is a cool bonus. It's subtle, but definitely effective at zeroing in on the dirt of your dreams.

As with any traditional analog octave effect, this one is most prevalent playing higher up the fretboard with the neck pickup selected, where it functions for single-note runs only. But it can add oddity and interest to other settings and playing positions too, and makes a cool addition to your dirt arsenal. Hitting the magnitude (boost) switch can slam the amp as intended, but it's also great when used subtly, adding not only a perceived volume lift for soloing but enhancing articulation in the process. And while the Life Pedal excels at foundation-rumbling excess, it also proved a great multifunction distortion pedal into my 1x10 Princeton combo, easily converting it into a proto-metal rig for the small stage, so don't rule it out if you're shy an earth-quaking, big-bottle stack.

SPECIFICATIONS

Sunn Life Pedal V3
CONTACT earthquakerdevices.com
PRICE $299 street

CONTROLS Amplitude, filter, distortion, clip, octave, magnitude; foot switches for amplitude, octave, magnitude
EXTRAS Input and output, Exp jack (Octave control), true-bypass, Flexi-Switch switching, LED indicator for each foot switch, center-negative 9V DC adaptor input
SIZE 5.75" x 5.25" x 1.5" (excluding feet and knobs)
BUILT Assembled in USA

KUDOS Extremely powerful and controllable distortion, fuzz and booster in a single package
CONCERNS Control functions take some getting used to

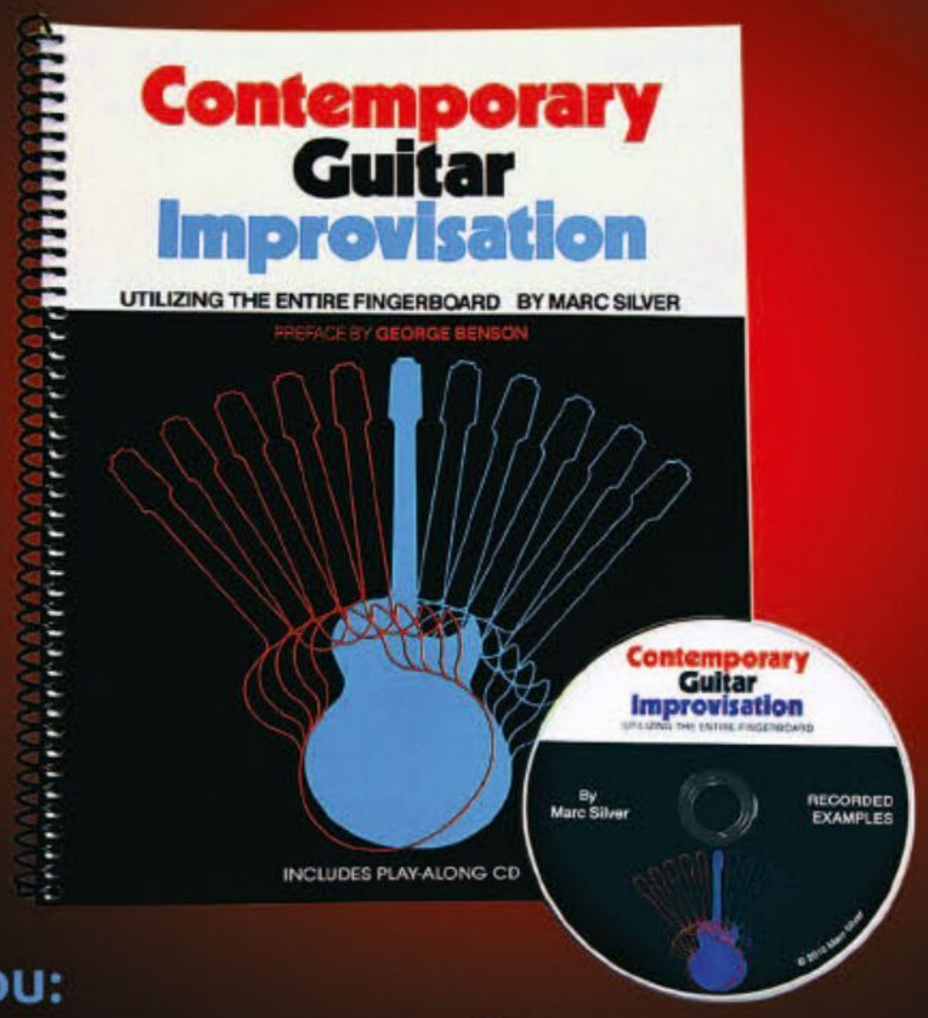
The First Two Lessons Will Transform Your Playing Forever

Lesson 1

By learning 5 simple patterns and the chords that match up to them, you form the foundation for shattering the barriers that are holding you back. You'll start hearing notes and chords that you recognize from listening to your musical heroes. Your fingers and ears will work together like never before.

Lesson 2

By connecting the five patterns, the fingerboard suddenly becomes a familiar superhighway that takes you anywhere you want to go. You'll understand how and why these related patterns and chords work together so well across the entire fingerboard. Lessons 3 through 8 will take you even further.



Contemporary Guitar Improvisation will teach you:

- How to improvise across the entire fingerboard on any single chord
- How to improvise in one position over multiple chord changes and keys
- Chords with fingerings and voicings that you understand and can modify
- How to accurately (and creatively) interpret chord symbols
- How to substitute chords
- How to use pentatonic and blues scales over ANY types of chords
- How to apply the 5 patterns to sightreading
- How to analyze songs so you play the right patterns
- How to analyze songs so you play the right patterns
- Chromatic connections and more

You don't need any music-reading ability to get the full benefit of the book, and the included CD has over 50 helpful play-along examples to keep you on track as you progress.

$45USD

Price includes shipping in the U.S and U.S. territories

"Marc Silver's book is for today's guitar player searching for a way to approach contemporary improvisation."

George Benson
Legendary Guitarist and Multiple Grammy® Award Winner

"I'm impressed by how comprehensive this method is, and how easy it is to understand."

Carl Verheyen
Lead Guitarist for Supertramp and First-call LA Session Guitarist

"Contemporary Guitar Improvisation is THE most informative book that unlocks the mysteries of the fretboard that I have ever seen."

Vincent LaBauve
Former Lead Guitarist for Barry White, Ike Turner, The Chambers Brothers, and The Coasters

Contemporary Guitar Improvisation is the single most important book I ever studied."

Chris Pelonis
Lead Guitarist and Musical Director for Jeff Bridges and The Abiders

Order Yours Today at MarcSilverGuitarImprov.com

SWOPE GUITARS

Descendant Offset Vibrato and Companion Bridge

Guitar Player Editors' Pick

TESTED BY DAVE HUNTER

THE MYRIAD QUIRKS of the Jazzmaster and Jaguar vibrato unit and bridge have occasionally frustrated offset players since these classic Fender guitars arrived in 1958 and '62, respectively. Their main failing lies in the rocking bridge's general instability and resultant tuning issues, as well as the poor sustain that sometimes results from both this and the low string tension, which is itself caused by the shallow break-angle from the vibrato plate to the bridge saddles.

Enter the Descendant vibrato and Companion bridge by Swope Guitars. While the bridge is a solid and superbly functional improvement over the original, the patented Descendant vibrato is arguably the cleverest piece of engineering here. One past solution for the strings' low break angle was to install a roller-bar between the vibrato and bridge to increase the tension, but that's a little clunky and arguably overkill. The ingenious solution from inventor Chris Swope (whose guitars we've reviewed in *GP*) is to lower the spring-loaded vibrato plate further into the unit and mill slots in the base plate to give the strings clearance on their way to the bridge, thus increasing string tension all on its own. It's a solidly built and high-quality unit overall, and it retro-fits vintage and current Fender Jazzmasters and Jaguars, as well as others made using this hardware.

The Companion bridge comes in either a fixed-radius version at 7 ¼, 9 ½ or 12 inches, or a Universal model with height-adjustable saddles. Vaguely resembling a Mustang bridge (which has often been used as a Jazzmaster and Jaguar "fix" in the past), it has six solid barrel-shaped saddles with grooves for stable string alignment, slots in the back wall for string clearance, and screws for the individual intonation of all saddles. In use, this bridge rocks slightly, but much less than the original.

Some basic understanding of guitar-hardware function helps when installing these units, but they were simple enough to fit in place, and Swope provides handy instructions. In the process, I also discovered nifty features, such as easy adjustment points for the vibrato's spring tension and the tightness of the arm's 360-degree "swing," along with a clever positioning of the arm that allows its instant removal for casing-up the guitar (with no danger of it falling out in use). The bridge offers far more adjustability than is immediately apparent, and includes optional flanges to lock the saddles tightly side to side to eliminate any rattles (which I never heard).

I tested the set loaded into a Fender American Vintage '65 Reissue Jazzmaster in place of the vintage-spec original units and was immediately taken with how well the Descendant and Companion achieved their design goals. Played unplugged, the guitar showed a distinct improvement in resonance and sustain, which translated to a little more depth and girth when it was plugged into a series of test amplifiers. While original-spec offset hardware can give decent tuning stability when set up right, I also found a noteworthy improvement in this department, making the Swope set an impressive design achievement all in all, and a worthy Editors' Pick Award winner. Offset players who really thrive on the light, airy, slightly zingy metallic jangle might miss a hair of that, but these guitars are plenty jangly by nature, and the Descendant and Companion cure genuine and longstanding bugbears without any noteworthy drawbacks.

SPECIFICATIONS

Descendant Offset Vibrato and Companion Bridge

CONTACT swope-guitar-shop.myshopify.com

PRICE $185 each, direct

MADE USA

KUDOS Clever designs that cure many longstanding offset vibrato issues, and are very well constructed

CONCERNS Some players might miss just a bit of that notoriously light, low-sustaining jangle

EONS

FIVE-STATE FUZZ

'Twas the night before Christmas, when all through the house, every creature was stirring, even your spouce.
"Don't turn the fuzz up any more, don't dare."
"But these riffs are for all, these riffs we must share!"
"The children are supposed to be snug in their bed,
and now they're all slam-dancing in-stead!"

Find what you need to rock around the tree at walrusaudio.com

SUBSCRIBE TODAY

GIVE A GIFT FOR FREE!

AND

GET A GIFT FOR FREE!

We'll send you and a friend each 12 issues of Guitar Player for
JUST $24 **PLUS** you will also receive a FREE GIFT from us

SAVE OVER 77%*

2 EASY WAYS TO ORDER

FOR FASTEST SERVICE CALL
1-800-289-9839 & mention code B2MXIN

Complete all information below & return with payment to:
Guitar Player PO Box 2029 Langhorne, PA 19047-9957

☐ Start my own subscription to Guitar Player and I'll give a gift subscription to a friend for FREE PLUS I'll also receive a digital edition of Ultimate Beatles Collection straight to my inbox for $24.

☐ Start just my own subscription for $18.95

SEND *MY* SUBSCRIPTION TO:

Name

Address

City/State/Zip Code

Email Address

SEND *MY GIFT* SUBSCRIPTION TO:

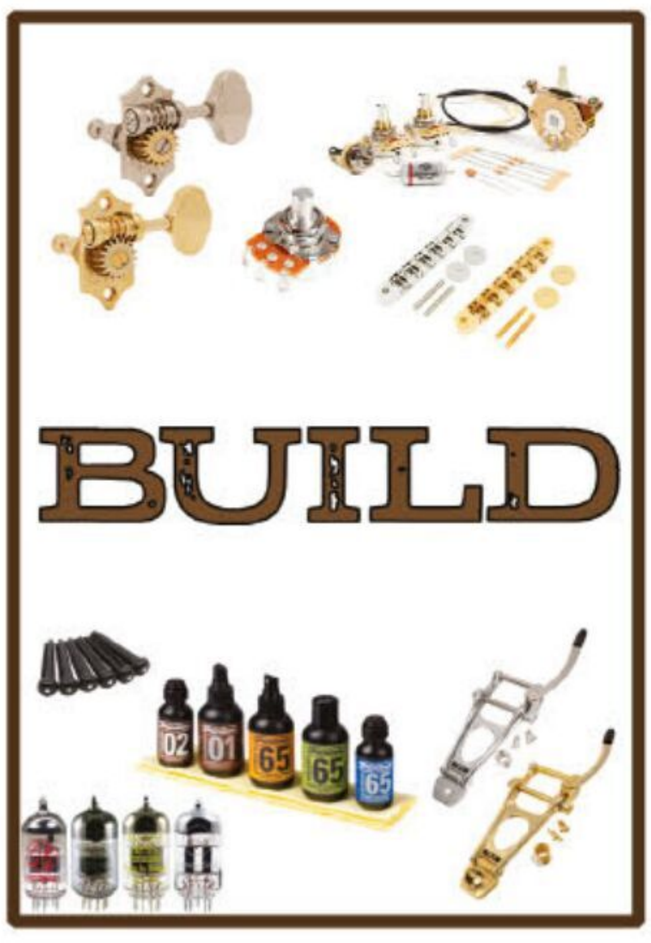
Name

Address

City/State/Zip Code

*Offer only valid on one-year print subscription. Pricing valid on US shipping addresses only. Savings based off US newsstand cover price of $8.50 per issue for 12 issues, plus the retail price of Ultimate Beatles Collection digital edition of $6.99. Ultimate Beatles Collection will be emailed 3-5 days after payment is processed. Check payment made payable to Guitar Player Magazine. Visit us at magazinesdirect.com or call 1-800-289-9839 for other subscription options. Your first issue will arrive 4-6 weeks after your payment is processed. Offer valid until January 31, 2023.

AmplifiedParts®
amplifiedparts.com



ADVERTISE HERE

Contact:
robert.dye@futurenet.com,
jeff.donnenwerth@futurenet.com

To subscribe to Guitar Player,
please visit our website at:
www.guitarplayer.com
or call (800) 456-6441

The First Two Lessons Will Transform Your Playing Forever

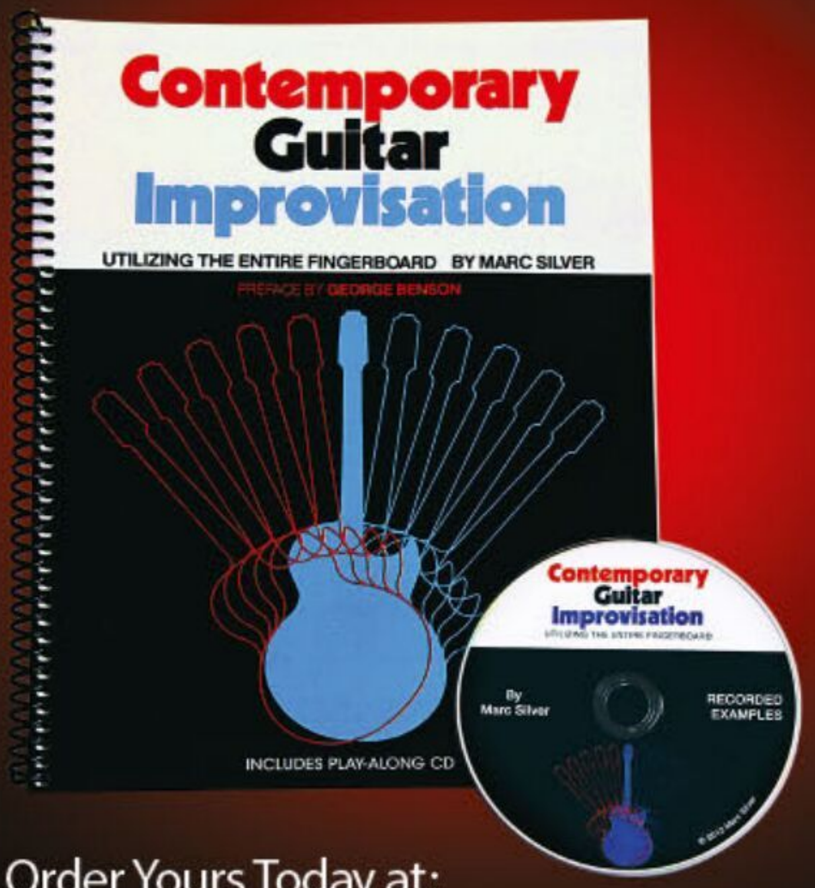
Lesson 1
By learning 5 simple patterns and the chords that match up to them, you form the foundation for shattering the barriers that are holding you back. You'll start hearing notes and chords that you recognize from listening to your musical heroes. Your fingers and ears will work together like never before.

Lesson 2
By connecting the five patterns, the fingerboard suddenly becomes a familiar superhighway that takes you anywhere you want to go. You'll understand how and why these related patterns and chords work together so well across the entire fingerboard. *Lessons 3 through 8 will take you even further.*

Contemporary Guitar Improvisation will teach you:

- How to improvise across the entire fingerboard on any single chord
- How to improvise in one position over multiple chord changes and keys
- Chords with fingerings and voicings that you understand and can modify
- How to accurately (and creatively) interpret chord symbols
- How to substitute chords
- How to use pentatonic and blues scales over ANY types of chords
- How to apply the 5 patterns to sightreading
- How to analyze songs so you play the right patterns
- Chromatic connections
- Much more

You don't need any music-reading ability to get the full benefit of the book, and the included CD has over 50 helpful play-along examples to keep you on track as you progress.



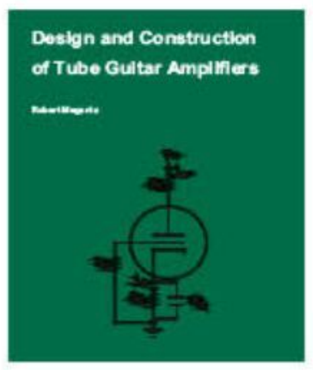
Order Yours Today at:
MarcSilverGuitarImprov.com
$45.00 USD (includes shipping in the U.S and U.S. territories)

FRETBOARD BIOLOGY
COMPREHENSIVE GUITAR PROGRAM

Guitar Player

EDUCATION AND TUTORIAL

Design and Construction of Tube Guitar Amplifiers
"this book is incredible"
www.translucidamps.com



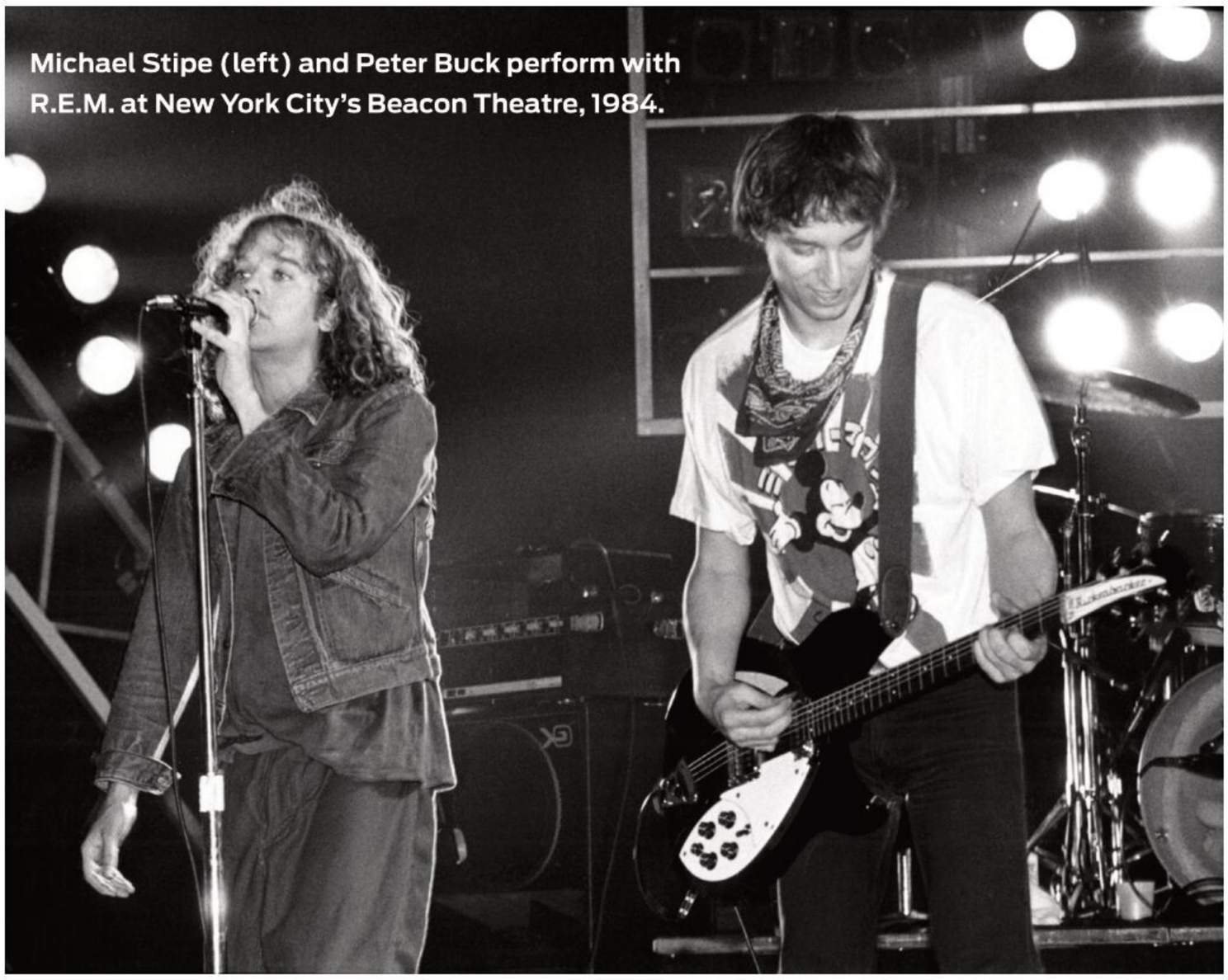
And now...
Design and Construction of Guitar and Bass Speaker Systems

How I Wrote...

"The One I Love"

Peter Buck opens up about R.E.M.'s 1987 breakthrough hit.

BY JOE MATERA



Michael Stipe (left) and Peter Buck perform with R.E.M. at New York City's Beacon Theatre, 1984.

"IT WAS ABOUT fucking time!" R.E.M. guitarist Peter Buck exclaims on recalling the group finally achieving its first U.S Top 10 hit with 1987's "The One I Love." "In America, it was like radio stations just weren't interested in whatever we did. It was never the right thing. But we sold a lot of records, and that single definitely changed the way the world perceived us. And all of a sudden, our audiences doubled."

NOT LOVE, ACTUALLY

It had been a long hard slog for the alt-rockers, who formed in 1980 and released four albums prior to 1987's *Document*, which included "The One I Love." Buck recalls coming up with the riff while on his front porch, noodling around on his guitar.

"I remember just sitting there and playing almost the whole song all the way through," he says. "And then I showed it to the rest of the guys, and *boom!* Musically, it was there within one or two passes. Then Michael [*Stipe*] sang it within a day after coming up with the lyrics. It was one of those instantaneous things."

While its lyrics allude to the subject of love, the song is often misinterpreted, Buck says. "It's really a dark song," he explains. "At first I thought, God, it's a love song. But then I was listening to the playback, and I went, Oh, it's not. But it can pass for one if you're not paying attention."

LITT UP

Recording sessions for the track began at Sound Emporium Studios, in Nashville, under the watchful eye of newly installed producer Scott Litt. "*Document* was the first record where Scott began working with us," Buck says. "He had a great ear and also had really good ideas about how to get the best out of us, so we didn't waste a lot of time. I could count on him knowing everything was going to sound great. I didn't have to sit there worrying about things like the second-rack tom and the tone of it, I could listen to it and know that everything was going to be fine. He was a great producer for us."

Litt was integral to helping Buck achieve the guitar sound he was after. "He helped immensely with the layering of my guitars," he says. "I didn't want to overdo it, but at the same time I didn't want to have just one guitar, like on a demo. Underneath the main guitar track there is a live guitar track, which I doubled with my black 1981 Rickenbacker 360 Jetglo that was strung with round-wound strings. I used a .014 on the high E and went down to a .058 on the low E. I overdubbed the guitar solo. When I realized there was going to be a solo, I did one that's more of a musical statement than a real solo. There were no effect pedals, as I never really used pedals in the studio at all, unless I actually had to.

"The track used various amps, as at that point I had a Mesa/Boogie and a Vox AC30 and went back and forth with those. There is also an acoustic guitar overdub buried in the mix. The acoustic was an early '60s Gibson rented from Gruhn Guitars."

THE ONE I SOMETIMES LOVE

"The One I Love" debuted at 84 on the *Billboard* Hot 100 in September 1987 and peaked at number nine in early December. "Having the chart success was important in that it meant we were reaching a larger audience," Buck says. Afterward, the band was labeled a jangle-pop group. "But that never bothered me, because, to a certain degree, it was true," he says. "There was that period in America where it was all jangly guitars, and every single band sounded like a bad version of R.E.M. But we did a lot of other stuff too, and there's plenty of records where it's really noisy, heavy and chaotic."

The song continued to be a fan favorite over the band's long run, which lasted until 2011. "We had it in our set list for a while, and then it wasn't, and then it came back," Buck explains. "To be honest, it wasn't a song I think that any of us felt was totally from the heart. It was just a cool song. It wasn't something I felt like I had to play at every gig. But at a certain point you realize that the audience really likes it, so why not put it in the set?"

"IT'S NOT REALLY A LOVE SONG. BUT IT CAN PASS FOR ONE IF YOU'RE NOT PAYING ATTENTION"

EBET ROBERTS/REDFERNS/GETTY IMAGES

Eastman

INTRODUCING

JULIET

She's waiting.

eastmanguitars.com

STRING9
STRING ENSEMBLE

The latest in the award-winning EHX 9 Series brings breathtaking orchestral and synthesizer strings to your guitar! With plug-n-play simplicity, you can add the legendary string sounds of the ARP® Solina, Crumar® Performer, Roland® Juno, and more to your live set or get creative at home or in the studio. And in a 9 Series first, our signature Freeze infinite sustain effect samples and holds notes and chords for the perfect accompaniment. Add a string section to your rig today!

SYNTH9
SYNTHESIZER MACHINE

MEL9
TAPE REPLAY MACHINE

KEY9
ELECTRIC PIANO MACHINE

B9
ORGAN MACHINE

C9
ORGAN MACHINE

BASS9
BASS MACHINE

electro-harmonix

WWW.EHX.COM/STRING9

All referenced third-party trademarks are property of their owners.
They are solely referenced to identify corresponding third-party goods.

9020
9000